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Thursday 18 June 1998

Jeudi 18 juin 1998



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 18 June 1998

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 18 juin 1998

The House met at 1000.

Prayers.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should amend legislation to permit all-terrain vehicles, ATVs, of three, four, five or more wheels, that are registered to a bona fide farmer, to be insured as a self-propelled vehicle of husbandry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Pursuant to standing order 95(c)(i), the honourable member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr Stewart: Thank you for the opportunity of introducing my private member's resolution. I'm pleased to present this resolution on behalf of the agricultural industry and farm insurance brokers.

This resolution is about insurance as it pertains to all-terrain vehicles, known simply as ATVs, that are exclusively used for farm use, and I want to emphasize the words "exclusively used for farm use." But more important, it is about farm safety and liability. It's a very simple resolution but I believe a very important resolution.

In no way does this resolution change the registration procedure with regard to the Ministry of Transportation's fees that they collect on all-terrain vehicles, nor does it interfere with regular insurance procedures of ATVs that are used by many residents other than a bona fide farmer.

The resolution sets the process in place to allow a bona fide farmer to insure his vehicle as a vehicle of husbandry if used exclusively for farm use. The onus is on the farmer to decide himself, in consultation with his insurance broker, if the ATV will be for farm use only or for other uses, which may include off-farm services such as hunting, fishing or cottage use.

I'm asking you to support this resolution which will permit legislative amendments to permit all-terrain vehicles of three, four, five or more wheels that are registered to a bona fide farmer to be insured as a self-propelled vehicle of husbandry. If this is to happen, then the farmer will have the opportunity to insure his ATV at approximately 40% of the cost in comparison with it being classified as a motor vehicle, which it is now.

There are many types of ATVs being used on the farms in Ontario, but two such types, the John Deere Gator and the Transporter, manufactured by Polaris, seem to be part of the problem and indeed part of the controversy. A recent article by the insurance industry reads:

"It has been brought to our attention by a member that there is confusion in the marketplace over the proper method to insure a Gator. This is a self-propelled farm implement manufactured by John Deere." I want to emphasize the words "farm implement" in this statement. "Many brokers in companies are under the impression that this type of vehicle can be covered under a farm liability policy similar to a tractor. We have reviewed this issue and found that this type of farm implement" — again emphasizing "farm implement" — "falls under the definition of a motor vehicle."

I ask you, why? It is because the legislation does not allow a special-circumstance classification. These vehicles are being used continuously in current farm operations in Ontario, things like fertilizing fields, transportation of feed from one farm to another, fence-mending and, in many cases, as a compact tractor. Why then would it not be classified as a farm implement and insured as a farm implement to a bona fide farmer?

Let me clarify. A bona fide farmer is a farmer who is in business, registered under the Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act, 1993, or Bill 42. This includes membership in the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Christian Farmers organizations.

Let me give you an example of insurance costs for farm implements in comparison with other implements used on the farm that have the same classification.

A compact farm tractor with a replacement value of \$20,000 is insured as a farm implement at an approximate cost of \$115, which would include fire, theft and liability for one year and is typically covered under a standard home/farm insurance policy.

By contrast, an ATV, at a cost of \$8,000, also exclusively used as a farm implement and so recognized by the Ontario sales tax guide, must be insured as a licensed vehicle under the auto insurance act, or Bill 59. The cost to insure that ATV is between \$300 and \$1,000. Again, a vehicle that is exclusively used as a farm implement is triple the cost to insure.

It appears that the gatekeepers of the auto insurance act do not realize that ATVs are an integral part of today's farm operations, doing work where heavy tractors fail.

As mentioned before, the onus is on the farmer or the farm business to insure their ATV correctly, if it is

reflective of an agri ATV. The farm business has the option, then, to insure the implement as they see fit.

Many farmers today are not insuring their farm-use ATV due to high insurance premiums, as I just indicated. If this is the situation, then the farm liability insurance is not in effect. This has a great impact on the farm business if the ATV, in the operation of that farm unit, injured a member of the family, staff or indeed the general public.

1010

If this resolution is to come into effect, then ATVs classed as a farm implement registered to a bona fide farmer would have to adhere to farm implement regulations, ie, carrying a red triangle, a slow-moving vehicle sign, and travelling on secondary roads under 40 kilometres per hour. As well, they would have to have a qualified person operating that ATV.

Also I would like to mention that for farmers who would have had their ATVs insured as a farm implement but who wish to operate them away from the farm, it is suggested that the insurance companies may create an interim short-term policy to allow farmers to take them on fishing trips, to the cottage or indeed to hunt camps, as many do. Again let me emphasize, the onus is on the farmer. The onus is on him to discuss and consult with the insurance company to make sure he has the right insurance on that farm implement.

This is a resolution that goes beyond the farm gate. Small family farms are diminishing. Large farms spread over large areas, some a number of miles away from each other, are indications of farming in the future. Equipment that supports the agri-industry of the future has also changed, and new ideas, new and advanced technologies have to be identified and supported.

I would like to thank publicly Mr Norm Blodgett of Darling Insurance, Peterborough, and Ken Kelly of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture for their help, input and counselling on this issue.

As I first indicated, this is a resolution that deals only with the agri-industry. It deals with options, it deals with public safety, and more importantly, it deals with liability. This resolution addresses an issue that is long overdue. It is a resolution that supports the agri-industry of this province and the farmer of the future. I ask for your support.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): I am pleased to rise to speak to this resolution of the member for Peterborough this morning and would say at the outset, without any doubt, that we support this resolution and its intent.

Interjections.

Mr Crozier: It wasn't meant to please you; it's meant to please the farmers.

In any event, like any resolution, what might seem to be a very simple issue is difficult to deal with. We all know that farmers use these all-terrain vehicles the same as other farm implements, to perform a number of farm tasks. They use them to transport feed and fertilizer sometimes, in small spraying operations, to go out and mend fences, to generally more conveniently get around the farm.

Others use all-terrain vehicles for all means of recreation, as has been mentioned; hunting; they may use them at

their cottages where they simply wouldn't be off the property. Some just use them for plain fun. I know of one person, for example, who has such a great relationship with her all-terrain vehicle that they have named it Big Red, this kind of thing. So they're used for all manner of uses.

The issue here seems to be one of liability, and as has been pointed out by the member for Peterborough, that really goes to the root of it. How is this vehicle used? How is this implement used? We can all understand that within reason a farm tractor is going to be used for that purpose, to do work on the farm. Occasionally we see them in rural fairs and parades where they draw floats and things like that, but generally speaking you see a tractor and you can be assured that it's going to be used as a farm implement.

The problem here is, as has been pointed out, that if the farmer insures the vehicle as a farm implement and assures the agent or the insurance company that it's going to be used only as a farm vehicle, and then for some reason, albeit it may be the only time, they use it for some other reason that's more recreational and something happens, then where are we? We then have a claimant who probably wants to satisfy a claim, perhaps a liability claim, and we have an insurance company that says, "Well, you assured us this was only going to be for farm use and now I see that in this instance it has been used for some other reason, therefore we're going to claim that we aren't liable," and you get into a real tough situation.

Somehow we must find, to take the intent of this resolution and if the government sees fit to bring legislation forward — of course, with a resolution of this Legislature in private members' business, we have no assurance whatsoever that the government will bring forth legislation — we have to somehow assure ourselves that in carrying out the intent of this resolution claimants somewhere down the line aren't found to have absolutely no coverage.

It even goes beyond these all-terrain vehicles where farmers are concerned about some of the regulation and some of the definition that they're under. We just met with the corn producers recently, and there is a new carrier safety rating system that the government is bringing in, one which on the surface we all agree with because of the safety aspect but which causes farm owners and farm operators a great deal of concern, because they have other vehicles that they use: trucks, for example.

We have trucks that are only used during tomato season in Essex county to bring tomatoes into the factory for processing. Are they going to be under the same regulation? We have farmers who use trucks, again, and it may only be for occasional farm use but probably wouldn't have any more than 2,000 or 3,000 kilometres a year on them at most.

So there are those kinds of issues, not only with an all-terrain vehicle which could be used as normal farm equipment, but we have other farm equipment considered to be vehicles at the present time that are going to fall under some stringent regulations the government is bringing in in the way of a carrier safety rating system, and we

would ask in the same vein that the government look at those kinds of uses of vehicles.

We support the resolution. We understand what the member for Peterborough is trying to do and we understand the concern of the farming community, but if this were to come to some kind of legislation, we must be sure that they are only being used for farm use and that insurance agents explain to users that if they're insured under that specific category, they not be used for anything else or they're running the risk of having any kind of a claim denied, whether it be property damage or liability.

We want to make sure that if these vehicles fall under this category, and it's been suggested that sometimes they're used to move material from farm to farm or from field to field, the operator complies with all the safety regulations and has a slow-moving vehicle sign on the equipment as well, and to recognize that all ATVs shouldn't be covered, that no one should try to take what would be normally in everyone's view a sport ATV, and just for the sake of saving the premium, then use it for any other purpose.

The resolution is simple, it's straightforward, it's understandable, but it raises a lot of questions. I'm sure the member for Peterborough understands that, and if we are to go forward with any kind of legislation on this, we're going to have to look very carefully at the regulations this would fall under.

I think the most important thing, and it's a problem within the insurance industry in general, I think, is communicating with their customer, making sure that the person who purchases the insurance for the intended use understands what the limitations are.

1020

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I rise to support the resolution. I acknowledge that the farm community often uses all-terrain vehicles for small jobs, transferring things, whether it be fertilizer or feed or seed in small amounts, from farm buildings to the field or from one field to another, and in doing so may have to travel on public roads, and the question then arises about liability and insurance.

I would accept the view and I understand the member saying that qualified people would have to be operating the vehicle — I hope that would mean someone at least 14 years of age and over — and also the use of the triangle sign at the rear of the vehicle to ensure that other vehicles on the road will know that there's a slow-moving vehicle on the sideroad, or hopefully the sideroad. I wouldn't want to see these on highways.

Having said that, I want to raise two particular concerns. The first one is that we must ensure that in doing this we are not allowing those who use these vehicles recreationally to somehow get an exemption or to get out of having to have proper insurance coverage. There are a lot of people who use these vehicles for hunting or, if they're going out in the bush, for recreational travel on trails. These vehicles are used a lot in northern Ontario in these areas, and in most of rural Ontario, I'm sure, by people who are cottagers and people who are

recreationists. We want to ensure that in passing this resolution, the regulation is done in such a way that we know these vehicles are being covered because of their use for farm operations, number one.

Number two, I want to raise a concern about some kinds of all-terrain vehicles. In my experience over the years I've come into contact with a lot of people who have had accidents with these vehicles. The four-wheelers, it appears to me as a layman, appear to be more stable than the three-wheelers. At a certain level of speed, if an operator of a three-wheeler needs to turn quickly, unexpectedly, it often tips. They are not as stable as the four-wheelers, it appears. I know of some very serious accidents that have occurred, one where an individual lost his leg because of the injuries he sustained because either a wild animal or a dog had run out in front of him when he was operating a three-wheeler. He was going at close to its top speed and he had to brake and turn the vehicle quickly. The vehicle overturned, his leg was crushed and he ended up losing his leg. It was very serious.

I would be tempted to argue that perhaps we should be passing a regulation under the Ontario Highway Traffic Act about the use of these three-wheelers in themselves for anything, because I don't think they are very stable and they can cause very serious injury in emergency situations that arise unexpectedly. I would hope, and this is just my personal opinion, that anyone using an all-terrain vehicle or purchasing an all-terrain vehicle would look very carefully at whether it's better to have a four-wheeler than a three-wheeler.

It reminds me a bit of these Sea-Doos or snow machines on water that are infesting our lakes across the province. These things —

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): — are fun.

Mr Wildman: They are fun. They're fast. You can go up to 60 kilometres an hour, I think, or more. But one of the problems with them is that at high speed, if another vessel traverses the path of this water-borne snow machine and they let off the throttle, they can't steer. They are very unsafe. If you're going at high speed and you let off the throttle you can't steer, you can't turn, so even if you try to turn you go straight ahead. In the brochures, the warning is there. Bombardier and other manufacturers warn purchasers of these vehicles that at high speed, if you let off the throttle, you cannot turn them. I know this is a sidebar to what we're discussing this morning, but I think we really must be very careful about these kinds of vehicles that are used for recreation largely and ensure that they are safe and that they are operated in a responsible manner.

Having said that I am concerned about the safety of three-wheelers as opposed to four-wheel all-terrain vehicles, I support the proposed regulation change to ensure that farmers can operate these vehicles in the normal practices of their farm activities of transporting from one place to another small amounts of fertilizer, feed or seed or other materials, whether they be insecticides, herbicides or whatever, and that we ensure they are indeed used, first, for farm purposes, that they are responsibly

operated by responsible people and that they have the triangle warning on the back of slow-moving vehicles and in this way support our farm community.

I add the sidebar that I hope the Ministry of Transportation would ensure that all these kinds of vehicles, when they are used for recreation, are indeed safe.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Durham East.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): Mr Speaker, I seek permission to share to my time with the member for Northumberland as well as the member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings.

The Acting Speaker: You have it automatically.

Mr O'Toole: First, I want to thank MPP Stewart from Peterborough for bringing forth a very practical resolution to assist the farming community and clarify the use of ATVs.

Second, I want to take the time to thank Dr Ross Stephenson, who is a professor as well as a former cabinet minister, an MPP as well as an MP, for assisting me in research on this very important resolution this morning. His consultations were with the farm community itself, the Durham Region Federation of Agriculture, Karen and Dennis Yellowlees.

The response from those consulted has been supportive of Mr Stewart's resolution. I would be remiss not to mention other important farm practitioners. These people are familiar with the use of the ATVs: Kirk Kemp, a well-recognized apple producer in my riding. David Frew was consulted, as well as Joe Christl and Jim Rickard. Harvey Graham, former president of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, was also consulted.

ATVs have become an integral part of the equipment of husbandry on most of the large farms in Ontario. Many of my farming constituents have remarked to me about their value in a farming operation. The proliferation of ATVs in the farming community is a direct result of their usefulness and flexibility in a wide range of farming enterprises. The ATV can access difficult areas and can pass through emerging crops up to seven centimetres in height with little or no damage to the crop. Compacting the soil is minimal with an ATV, especially when compared to large four-wheel tractors or pickups.

ATVs are particularly useful for farmers with large cropping enterprises. Farmers are advised to take soil samples and establish existing soil fertility levels and to determine any additional requirements for fertilizer or manure. To walk over several hundred acres of crop land is a very time-consuming job and too frequently proper soil analyses were not determined because of the time and effort required. With an ATV, the job is done with ease, and there is the time consideration, as well as no damage to existing crops. Also, ATVs have convenience carrier racks to provide ease of transportation of heavy soil samples, for instance, as well as fertilizers.

1030

An additional farm use of ATVs is for herbicide application. In crops where weed growth exceeds crop growth weight in the spring, a differential in height between the weeds and the crop is created as height differential allows

the farmer to wipe out the tall weeds with a saturated wick. Thus there is minimal herbicide released to the environment. Because of the soft, low-inflation tires, there is essentially no damage to the crop. This form of weed control is used most commonly for milkweed control in soybeans and white beans. In my riding of Durham East, these are important cash crops. Note that soybeans are the most widely used cash crop in Ontario, recently passing the acreage of corn.

Superior crop management requires infield observation of the germinating and growing period. Specifically, farmers look for proper emergence of the crop, adequate weed control, disease infestation and insect problems. If difficulties are recognized early, in many cases, corrective action can be taken. Farmers with large acreages too frequently use a drive-by method of observation from the roadside or the laneway. ATVs allow for convenient, quick, intrusive inspection of fields throughout the spring, regardless of the crop.

In large pick-your-own operations — we're all familiar with these; Watson's in my area is well known throughout the area; there are a number of them — ATVs are useful for supervising client pickup as well as transporting baskets of fruit down the narrow pathways to the check-out. The flexibility of ATVs for this application far exceeds the use of conventional tractors, cars or trucks.

For large livestock operators — I mentioned before — like Harvey Graham and Trevor Nesbitt, ATVs have become almost a necessity of doing business. On a large ranch the ATV has replaced the horse for checking cattle as well as fences. Predators are becoming a concern among many livestock producers as the value of animals has greatly increased. ATVs provide the fastest and most thorough coverage of any means of transportation modes used.

Possibly the widest application for ATVs is on the livestock operation for pasture reclamation. Farmers commonly pasture their roughest or wettest lands, which many times can only be harvested through grazing by animals. Hence pasturing obviously is a very practical application for the ATV.

In summary, ATVs have acquired a lasting presence in farm operations as useful, flexible, convenient and modest cost vehicles of husbandry. Their usefulness far exceeds their role as a recreational vehicle on the farm. For those reasons, I support the resolution brought forward by my colleague from Peterborough, Mr Stewart.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to join the discussion on the resolution and to say, as my colleagues said, that we're very supportive of it. My background: In the private sector I spent 25 years working mainly in the food business with producers, processors and retailers, and learned that it's an industry that is rapidly changing, that embraces change readily, that has been able to adapt technology and modern environmental pesticides and has really kept itself world-wide competitive by changing quickly.

What we've got before us is another move to help the industry continue to adapt and change and keep up with

technology. I was pleased the member for Peterborough spelled out for us some of the protections that are in his resolution. Without doubt, our agricomunity makes widespread use of these vehicles now. They are an integral part of their operations. We have to make sure, as government, that we remove the unfair impediment to the use of these vehicles.

The member for Peterborough spelled out also some of the protections that are in here that I think are important in terms of ensuring that our agricomunity get the proper insurance on these things and, if they are used in a recreational sense, that they're properly insured and, if they're used on roads, that they're properly marked and things like that. It's a small, but important step forward.

It raises a broader issue, and that is, how do we, as government, ensure that we are moving as fast as our industries are moving to allow them to remain competitive? We have to have a resolution here and will spend an hour debating it. It may require legislation. I'm sure to many in our agricomunity it seems that rather than government being contemporary and modern, we're the ones that are slowing things down. This illustrates it. ATVs have been widely used in the agricomunity for some time and yet we've got in the road of them because we have on our books legislation that makes it difficult to get proper and fair and farm-related insurance.

It raises for all of us, as legislators, how do we change the way that we govern and the way that we operate that will keep up with the rest of the world, which is moving very quickly?

I have some suggestions, something the NDP did in their final year: They introduced a process of bringing forward annually an omnibus bill that encompassed changes to all sorts of legislation. The bill probably had changes to 500 pieces of legislation.

Mr Wildman: But they always have to be non-controversial.

Mr Phillips: What the member for Algoma said is true. They said to us, in opposition, "Listen, if you've got problems with any of these, we'll withdraw them." We did express concern on two or three areas, or four or five areas, and they were withdrawn from the bill. The bill then was introduced as legislation and passed.

Interjection.

Mr Phillips: I will say, because Mr O'Toole has provoked me a little bit, that the omnibus bill was a good idea, but it was abused in the first months of the Harris government when an omnibus bill called Bill 26 was brought in and was tried to be rammed through within days of being introduced. It had nothing to do with an omnibus bill that was designed to update legislation; it was all about ramming through dramatic changes under the guise of an omnibus bill. What was a good idea, an omnibus bill designed to update legislation in a non-controversial, all-party-agreement way, was abused by Mike Harris in the very first few weeks of his government. It became known as the bully bill. That was an abuse of a good idea.

The member for Peterborough has brought forward a good idea. It is very helpful to our agricomunity. But it's probably one of 50 ideas that we should be bringing forward. We probably still have impediments to new technology, biotechnology, all sorts of things that our agricomunity have to and want to and will embrace. There's a suggestion, that a thing like this should be brought forward annually in an omnibus bill where we can deal with 500 items that would help, not just our agricomunity but all of Ontario, but it has to be done in a way that is fair to the community and fair to the process.

I was very supportive of what the NDP brought in, in their final year. It was a huge bill. It was given to us with ample time to consult. There were three or four things in there where we said, "We don't think this should be in the omnibus bill." They were taken out and we passed that bill. I bring that forward because the public look to us to move our institutions on into the 21st century in a modern, contemporary way. This illustrates that today.

The resolution, this motion on ATVs is worthy of support, but it could be encompassed in a more all-encompassing bill, and maybe the government will choose to bring it forward in that manner, where we can assure the public that we're as modern as the world outside these four walls. We'll be supporting the resolution. I appreciate the resolution coming forward, and my suggestion is ways that we can encompass good ideas like this in a broader fashion.

1040

Mr Bisson: I rise in support of this motion brought forward by the member for Peterborough. We understand what the member is trying to do here. The member is trying to make life for those who operate farms a little bit easier.

I know in our community of Cochrane South we have a number of farm operations, from the Black River and Matheson area, in and around Val Gagne and Timmins, and often you don't need to be pulling a full rig out of the barn in order to bring a sack of seeds or a pump that needs to be changed or a part for a piece of equipment that's broken down into the field. They need to use something that's a little bit more economical and a lot easier to start up and take out into the field. That's what the member here is trying to do. He's trying to say that you can use an ATV for the sole purpose of being able to do those small odd jobs that need to be done on the farm rather than using a large piece of equipment. There are all kinds of good reasons for that and I support what the member is trying to do.

I want to say up front that I am supporting it, but I do have a few concerns. Growing up in the city of Timmins, a lot of my friends came from the farm community. As youngsters of 14 or 15 years old, we used to like taking off on our motorbikes — they didn't have ATVs back then — and going for a ride in the bush or whatever. Given some of my friends, the ability to take their —

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: No, not at that age. I won't repeat what the member just said.

The opportunity to take out an ATV or a motorbike at 14 or 15 years old, thinking, "Because I live on a farm I can go anywhere I want," is a bit of a temptation for a young man or a young woman, to take such a motorized vehicle out on to the roadway, maybe without having full control or trying to do something that they shouldn't be doing.

My plea would be this: I don't want to create some kind of regulation that's so complex it's difficult and impossible to put in place, but I'm wondering if the Ministry of Transportation would look at some sort of permit system that says: "I'm a farmer. Here's the geographical area of my farm. I have to cross Highway 11 or car road number 3" — you remember car road number 3, Mr Wildman? You would have to have a permit that says, "This ATV can be operated for the purpose of the operation of the farm within a particular geographical area."

At least in that way you're taking away the temptation of some to take that vehicle and say, "I don't have to bother getting insurance; if I get caught I'll just say I was on my way to the next-door neighbour's farm to pick up something," or whatever it might be. It raises a whole bunch of other issues of liability.

We know there are increasingly more accidents with what we call ATVs today, especially three-wheelers. As my colleague from Algoma pointed out, there's an increasing number of accidents because these are very fast machines and can be very dangerous, not only for the person operating it but for somebody who might be walking along a country road or going out for a ride on a bike, in a car or whatever it might be. We want to take away the temptation of somebody taking that machine out and driving it for other than what it was intended to be used for in this particular motion that we have before us today.

I would ask that the Ministry of Transportation look at that to see if it's practical. It may not be. Maybe in the end it would just be too complicated to put in place, but we need to find some way to assure ourselves that this particular motion would make the regulatory changes under the highway transport act to specifically make sure that ATVs are used in this particular case for farm operations.

The other thing I want to speak to very quickly is the question of a qualified operator. Again, that's something we need to make sure is covered here. We don't want a situation where this vehicle is being used by somebody who is not able to handle it safely, for his or her own safety as well as for other people who might be around. We need to find some way to say either it's a person with a valid driver's licence or somebody who goes through a required training program or whatever, to assure ourselves that person is utilizing that equipment in a safe way.

Let me just give you one of my experiences. I said earlier I like to ride dirt bikes quite a bit. I have a number of motorcycles and like to go in the bush with both my dirt bikes. I've gone out with a lot of friends who have ATVs and they tend to be a little bit braver with ATVs than I would ever be with a two-wheeled bike, because you have this false sense of security that this thing is a lot more stable than a two-wheeled motorcycle.

Often, when we want to get from point A to point B, we'll end up crossing some abandoned field that might be in our way to where we're going. You know what's in abandoned fields. There are all kinds of ruts, there are all kinds of hidden hazards under the tall, unkempt grass — hay, actually — in those fields.

I've had a number of my friends take some pretty major wipeouts with their ATVs because they have this sense of, "I just go flying across here, I don't have to worry, I've got four wheels, nothing will ever happen to me," and wham. They end up in a predicament where they go flying off the bike. Luckily, up till now, neither of those two fellows I was with have gotten hurt in a serious way.

I bring it back to the point of making sure that we have qualified operators on these pieces of equipment, because you wouldn't want somebody, especially because it'll be used primarily in the field, utilizing this equipment who is not trained to do so. They're dangerous pieces of equipment if not properly operated. I think for the safety of those people who are using them, those people we're intending to have this regulation applied to, we want to make sure that we make it safe. I would also urge the ministry to look at, if at all practical, some sort of a system that makes sure that those people who are utilizing the ATVs, the operators, are properly qualified.

The other issue I want to talk about is the issue of liability in the case of accidents. That comes back to the first point. You could be in a situation where you're going for a walk or a ride down a country road and all of a sudden you get hit by an ATV that happens to be driven by somebody who is not using it for it what it was intended. In other words, rather than going from field A to field B, the person says, "I'm 15, 16 years old. I want to go for a ride down to Harry's place," and is bombing down the road with the ATV and all of a sudden somebody gets run over. The issue of liability comes here because if that thing's uninsured, you know what's going to happen. Basically the person is out of luck when it comes to some sort of compensation or, in the event of death, benefits that have to be paid to the family.

That's why I want to ensure that we limit the use of these things on public roadways just for the purpose of getting from one field to the other and not for bombing down country roads to go visit your friends or neighbours. These things should be used for what they're intended. If you want to put them on a roadway, they should be licensed, driven by a licensed operator and insured, and for the regulation we have here, just to be able to cross from one field to another.

Mr Gary Fox (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings): I certainly appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House to support this resolution from my fellow colleague, the member for Peterborough.

I'd like to explain some of the different ways these vehicles can be used on a farm. The reason I can do that is that I feel I'm probably the closest to being a true farmer here in the House, though there are other members here, like the Minister of Agriculture and the member for Simcoe East, who have had farming experiences. They're

retired from it now. We do have a few hobby farmers here also.

The first thing that comes to mind is a farmer is using this machine for getting around to check the fences. Myself, being a cattle and sheep farmer, and I do have four pasture farms, that leaves me with miles of fences to repair. They're great for carrying tools, especially a chain saw. I've walked miles of fences with a roll of wire over my shoulder and a pair of pliers in my back pocket and carrying a chain saw. You've got to have this with you because you get windfalls all the time and you've got to check these fences.

Then we've got an apparatus rigged up on the back of them. That's for rolling out wire. A lot of us use electric fence now and then we have fences along woods and other areas where you have to use barbed wire. It's a handy tool for making sure that you can get this job done a lot easier.

1050

I was impressed with the comments of the member for Durham East. For a fellow who lives in the city of Bowmanville, he did an excellent job of explaining a lot of uses of this machine on the farm. One that he mentioned was for chemicals on the crops. One particular item that we use a lot is a wick-weeder. This is a wick, really; you can put it on the front of a four-wheeler and use it for spot spraying thistles in crops. But two of the most common ones which have been mentioned are milkweed and velvetleaf. These are common weeds in soybean. What happens is that these weeds grow faster than the soybeans, so therefore they get taller. When you go through with a wick-weeder, they will actually only rub on the velvetleaf and the milkweed, so therefore you can eliminate these two particular weeds without interfering with the crop itself. It's amazing: A gallon of spray will do 100 times more than if you are actually having to spray it on the crops. It certainly saves on the cost of chemicals and it's certainly a lot better for our environment.

Another thing that happens is that upshot corn can be a real problem, especially if you've had a late harvest the year before, and you have to eliminate that from a soybean crop.

A lot of people use them for spreading of grass seed and fertilizer. I know we do a lot of this ourselves because we grow winter wheat. Probably in March, somewhere in there, we like to get over these fields and put the grass seed on so that when the spring thaw comes, it will work into the ground and start to grow so that we'll have a hay crop the next year.

In some cases you have to use them for fertilizer. If you get an early breakup of frost and the fields are a bit soft, you don't want to be leaving tracks in the fields, so therefore it's nice to use this machine to do that, especially on your winter wheat and sometimes on meadows, because you like to put extra fertilizer on your meadows.

The great thing about these machines for this purpose is the fact that they're light. They don't pack the ground and they don't leave ruts in the fields. We like to keep our fields nice and smooth. The thing is, because the machine is light, when you do drive over a crop, it doesn't destroy

the crop. They'll usually spring back up and continue to grow.

The other thing is that they're great for getting around to check the fields and check the crops and particularly the livestock, because you've got to keep track of them to see that they are all there and there's no sickness. You can soon scoot over the fields and do this.

Another thing that's important, especially where I'm also a sheep farmer, is that we use this machine a lot for yarding of sheep at night. We have to yard our sheep at night for predator control. We don't have to do a lot of this in our place because our sheep come to the yards at night, but when you turn them out first in the spring, you have to get them the first month or so to the barns at night before they get the idea and come on their own.

They're great for getting around to different barns. I know we have five different barns that we operate in the wintertime, and they're great for slipping around quick and easy to get to these different barns to do chores. You know, the big machines they've got now have even got electric dump boxes on them and they are great for handling feed.

The other thing that's important is the fact that they certainly save on the pickup truck by being able to get around in the fields and that a lot easier, and they're certainly cheaper to operate and to own. There's a significant difference in the cost comparison and the upkeep. The thing is, keep the pickup truck on the road and out of the fields and it'll last you a lot longer.

These machines should be classified as a self-propelled farm vehicle, the same as a tractor, for the uses that I have described.

I had a major fire in January 1989 and all the machinery was stored at this time, including the ATV. It was quite a coincidence, because the day before the fire I said to my boys, "Put that ATV inside," because it was sitting on the lawn in front of the house, and they did. I had no insurance, and with this resolution it could have been a claim for me instead of a total loss.

The thing I want to point out is that to a farmer this is considered as a piece of equipment, not a toy, and I fully support this resolution.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I appreciate having a couple of minutes to make a few comments on the resolution being brought forward by the member for Peterborough, a very thoughtful resolution to put in proper perspective the use of all-terrain vehicles on the farm, to recognize the importance of insurance and to get that into the proper category as we look at this as properly being classified as a self-propelled vehicle of husbandry.

We've had an excellent description from the member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings on how these are used, everything from spraying of crops to wicking to checking for pests to examining crops and livestock. They're used in all kinds of weather and seasons. They're very ideal as it relates to their size, very light, with large wheels for getting across wet land in the springtime and also not packing crops or packing the soil. But as you look at this vehicle sitting there and you look at a small tractor,

yes, it's driven by all wheels, but there's not an awful lot of difference other than the name that we put on them in what you would use a small tractor for versus what you would use an all-terrain vehicle for.

Certainly this resolution is consistent with the legislation that's presently on the books. This particular resolution is supported by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and by the insurance industry. The recognition of an ATV or all-terrain vehicle as a self-propelled vehicle for husbandry means that for farmers the insurance liability changes considerably and for insurance it's automatically considered as other farm equipment. We're talking about here a bona fide farmer who owns an ATV for farm use and who is registered with the Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act of 1993.

I compliment again the member for Peterborough for bringing forth this particular resolution and I, as a member of this party, can enthusiastically support it.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Peterborough, you have two minutes.

Mr Stewart: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'd like to thank the members — and it's going to take a minute or two — for Algoma, Cochrane South, Agincourt, Essex South, Durham East, Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings, and Northumberland for their support.

As I mentioned, this is a liability resolution, a safety resolution, but indeed it is an agricultural resolution that I believe is long overdue. I know there's concern that maybe it may give them an option not to insure these vehicles right. I think the farm community is very cognizant of the fact that they have to make sure they do have the right insurance on farm implements that they use. In this particular case, it does give them the option to decide whether it should be for farm use or whether it should be for recreational purposes or off the farm, ie, hunting, cottaging, whatever.

What we're trying to do here is make sure that, first of all, the vehicles are insured, which is not happening in some instances because of the great price for insurance in comparison to tractors or whatever. I think what we're trying to do is to make sure that there is insurance, that the farmers can afford it, and that the vehicle will be insured so that their farm liability will kick in if indeed there happens to be an accident or whatever.

Again, I appreciate the support of this House. I appreciate the support of the agricultural community, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and indeed the insurance companies, one of which is probably the largest farm insurer in this province. I appreciate their support, their consultation and their advice to get this resolution presented. I again appreciate the support of all sides of the House.

The Acting Speaker: The time for the first ballot item has expired.

1100

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 SUR UNE TOLÉRANCE ZÉRO EN MATIÈRE D'ABUS DE SUBSTANCES

Mr Young moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to promote zero tolerance for substance abuse by children / Projet de loi 30, Loi encourageant une tolérance zéro concernant l'abus de substances par des enfants.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Pursuant to standing order 95(c)(i), the member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre): A few weeks ago 14 high school students were arrested on drug trafficking charges. There was nothing particularly special about this school. It was not labelled by police as a school that had a particularly bad drug problem. Rather, it was a school practically like any other. That being the case, we have a very serious problem on our hands and it's time we faced the fact that the drug culture is an entrenched part of our youth culture of the 1990s.

The Addiction Research Foundation's most recent statistics show that drug and alcohol use among youth is at its highest level since 1980. Cannabis, cocaine, hallucinogen and alcohol use ebbed during the late 1980s and the 1990s, but it is steadily rising again. Fully 31.9% of grade 7 students — these are children 12 and 13 years old — and over 80% of grade 11 students, 16- and 17-year-olds, consumed alcohol in 1997; 42% of grade 11 students had smoked marijuana last year; over 13% of grade 11 students had tried LSD, a powerful hallucinogen.

I know through my involvement with Parent Watch, an organization in my riding that teaches parents how to recognize and deal with substance abuse, that these figures are not exaggerated. Today, drugs are far more potent than they were in the 1960s. There are new herbal drugs that are technically legal; young people take them and don't actually even know what's in them most of the time, and they can carry deadly side-effects. They're attractive because they're affordable and they're easy to get.

As I stated in this House a few weeks ago, coolers are growing in popularity among young drinkers. Products like Strawberry Shortcake, which is a pink milkshake look-alike, contain 12.9% alcohol. Daiquiri Slush is a frozen treat, like a Slushie or an Icicle that we used to have when we were kids; it comes in a wide-mouthed bottle and you put it in the freezer. It's got 6.9% alcohol. When my generation was young, if we wanted to experiment with alcohol, we had to put up with the horrible taste but now the marketers have got around that. They have fruity, sweet drinks, and the young people don't have to put up with taste; if they drink them cold, they don't even taste the alcohol.

While the popularity of drugs and alcohol are growing, so are the societal costs, including academic failure and family breakdown resulting from addiction and crime. We

have health problems, and occasionally, through accident, death. Hardly a week goes by that we don't hear about a serious automobile accident, a drowning, an injury or a death involving drugs or alcohol and youth.

Our children gather for bush parties, where they drink and take drugs in neighbourhood parks and ravines. A pickup truck with 16 teens in the back flipped over on a road outside Ottawa a few weeks ago. It was actually a miracle that no one was killed. They were coming from a bush party.

Many schools put garbage bins outside schools as huge ashtrays, permitting cigarette use in our schools. We are sending our youth terribly mixed messages. Experts tell us tobacco is perhaps the most addictive drug available. Some youth become addicted to it on their first try, introducing them to an addictive lifestyle and condemning many of them to the expense and misery of ill health.

Tobacco kills 30,000 to 40,000 Canadians a year from cancer and other respiratory diseases, often a slow and agonizing death. The cost to our health care system, for which we all pay, is in the billions. I try to answer, how will we justify to our teens, when they become middle-aged adults in the future, that we stood aside and let them head down this path of self-destruction?

Tobacco use and drug use often go hand in hand. A drop of hash oil on an ordinary cigarette turns it into a powerful cannabis joint. As we drive by our high schools, we often witness drug use in the open via this method. You can drive by many of our high schools and see our teens having a last puff as they head into class; we think they're smoking tobacco, but in fact they're smoking a powerful cannabis joint. It makes it impossible for them to learn and it makes it impossible for them to function. A cigarette package is the best place to hide dope, so our school authorities need a truly effective ban on tobacco to keep drugs out of our schools.

The vast majority of marijuana smokers smoked tobacco first. In fact, it's the only place they could ever learn to inhale smoke.

I have made important changes to the bill since it was first introduced last session. I listened very closely to the debate from my colleagues in the other parties, which was approximately a year ago. I also took the input I received from teachers, principals and parents and used it to make this bill more effective. Gone are the fines and penalties for teachers and principals that some of my colleagues in the House couldn't support. Gone are the fines and penalties for students and their parents that some members couldn't support. This bill was never meant to be punitive. It was meant, and this new version is meant, to get our young people's attention and their parents' attention, to educate them, to help rehabilitate them, to prevent first-time or casual use of substances from becoming a lifestyle and a habit, and to bring our youth back from the edge.

Support for this legislation is critically important. We are witnessing a terrible trend towards increased substance abuse among our youth. For their sake, we must not delay in addressing it. Some say there is no sin but ignorance, but there is another: It is denial. I advocate no

measure of tolerance for substance abuse by youth in Ontario. Let us face this problem and insist that our youth and their parents deal with it, while offering them counselling and help.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I'm pleased to rise to speak to the bill from the member for Halton Centre. When you look at the title of the legislation, on the surface it's motherhood and apple pie. But with this bill, as with many others, the devil is in the details. When you look at the specifics of the bill and what the bill is supposed to do and how it can be implemented, it is a disastrous piece of legislation.

What you are doing with this bill is that you're taking a serious problem and putting such an absolutely bizarre degree of dealing with it that it lacks credibility in terms of enforcement. If this bill were passed, it would be an absolute nightmare for schools to try to implement, particularly as it deals with cigarettes, lit or unlit. Schools are realistic. Schools understand that just because there are smoking bans and kids under the age of 19 can't purchase cigarettes, it doesn't mean kids are not going to smoke. Unfortunately, that's a reality and it's a problem. It's a problem that has to be dealt with through education, through dealing with kids at an early age through the school system, to explain to them the effects of cigarette smoking. You don't do it by taking this tough, law-and-order and muscle approach to try and deal with a problem of attitudes with kids.

1110

When you look at this bill, it amends the Education Act and the Tobacco Control Act. It makes principals and teachers be police officers, bouncers and enforcers. Look at how it's going to work. If a teacher, board employee or principal suspects that a student — no definition. It could be a kid in grade 2 or a kid in grade 12; it could be the kid in grade 2 who, as a joke, took the cigarette from mommy or daddy at home and put it in his pocket, or the kid in grade 12 who smokes. There's no distinction between the two. So you can take any of those situations and they would give principals and teachers the power to search a locker or to search a kid and use reasonable force to do so — again the term that came up in the bill last week, "reasonable force."

What is it with this Tory government and the use of reasonable force on kids? What is this obsession you have with using violence and force? I don't understand that. It is mind-boggling, why you would ask a teacher to use force in order to get into a locker to see if a kid has a cigarette in there. That is the role of police officers. Police officers are there to enforce the law and police officers have the authority to use force if necessary to do their work. It is not the role of teachers or principals and it is absurd that you would suggest that in this bill.

So you first of all use this force. Then if you find a cigarette, you get to the stage of excluding the student. So now, because the student has an unlit cigarette in his or her pocket, you're going to exclude the student from the classroom. This is great. That'll solve the problem. You're into exam time, you're into May, you're into June. A kid

gets caught with a cigarette in his pocket and you're going to take him out of the class, exclude him. Then you're going to put him in a segregated program. You're going to set up programs for kids who have cigarettes in their pockets, for them to take whatever courses they were in to get kicked out of that class.

Think about how bizarre this is. Think about school boards that cannot even deal with carrying on with programs you now have as a result of your massive cuts, and now you're asking programs to set up segregated programs. You take a kid out of French immersion and you're going to set up a French immersion for that one kid because he has to be out of the classroom, according to this bill, and he's been excluded and now you have to have a program for him. Just think of the implementation.

Then you force mandatory addiction counselling. So you're out of your class. First of all they use force to get into your locker if they have to. Then they kick you out of your class and they put you into a special program that they're going to set up for you. God know who's going to fund it. Then you're going to force counselling. You're now going to have mandatory addiction counselling. How is that going to work? Who is going to do that? Are you going to hire addiction counsellors in the schools now? Or are you going to ask the guidance counsellors, who I'm sure are not experts on addiction, to carry on with their regular responsibilities and to counsel maybe 100 or 200 kids in a high school on addiction.

Then if they don't follow the criteria you set out, you go to the next step. You kick the kid out of the school completely. That solves the problem. Kick a 16-year-old kid out of school because he hasn't followed your addiction counselling program, because he had a cigarette in his pocket. Think how bizarre this is. What is that going to solve? How are we going to deal with the problem by doing that? It gets better.

Mr Young: The bill doesn't do that. Try reading it.

Mr Agostino: It gets better. The member for Halton Centre is heckling and out of control as usual. He's had his opportunity. If he would just listen quietly for a minute it would help.

Mr Young: Why don't you read the bill?

The Acting Speaker: The member for Halton Centre

Mr Agostino: Then there's the provision for calling the police. That's even better now. Now we're going to call the police. So we've kicked the kid out of class, we've put him in a special program, we've given counselling — he doesn't want it — and we've kicked him out of school. As that kicks in, we're now going to call the police.

Again think of this. We're talking about cigarettes. We're talking about a kid with an unlit cigarette in his or her pocket. You are now going to file a report with the police department because it breaks one of the Ontario laws that you're going to pass through this. A police officer is now going to investigate the case of the cigarette in the kid's pocket. Think about this: Police officers, police departments are stressed to the limit, police departments are absolutely overworked, police departments sometimes don't have the ability, from the point of view of staffing,

to come to a break-in at your home and you have to file a report, or if your car gets broken into, because they don't have the manpower to do that, and now you're going to get them to be the cigarette police. So the principal has to file a report and turn over the evidence, I presume this wrapped cigarette in a plastic envelope with no fingerprints on it, and this evidence then gets turned over to the police, and God know what the police are supposed to do at that point.

That is what this bill is talking about. It is an extreme, Reform-minded approach. It is a law-and-order, lay-the-boots-to-the-kids approach. It is the tough-love vision that you have with every problem you deal with, that if you pound the kid into submission he's going to get better. That is not how we deal with it. There isn't an addiction counsellor or an expert in this field anywhere across this province who is going to tell you that technique works.

Principals that I've spoken to are upset about this bill; teachers are upset about this bill; the police officers I've spoken to laugh at the bill. It is not workable. It is not enforceable. It is an extreme, extreme, extreme reaction and it doesn't deal with the root of the problem. It doesn't help the kid.

To wrap up, clearly the use of violence, kicking the kid out of school, using the police, all that's going to do is aggravate and make a situation that can be dealt with into one that you're not going to deal with. I ask the member again in his remarks to explain to me how kicking a 16-year-old kid out of school because he has an unlit cigarette in his pocket and doesn't want to follow the Gestapo regime that you've set up is going to solve the problem. I do not think it will.

I hope the members of this House see the unreasonableness in this bill and vote against it.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I'm going to take half the time and allow another of our caucus members to speak to this.

In the time I've got, let me say up front I recognize that the member is honourable and is trying to address a problem in our communities, but that's as far as I'm willing to go. There is a problem in our community, where not only young people but older people, some people our age, have an addiction to various types of drugs, and the member's trying to speak to that, but I think his approach in trying to deal with it is way off base. If you take a look at this particular bill, it really is a question of the member grabbing a shovel to swat a fly. In my view, it goes way beyond the bounds of trying to deal with this problem.

Let's just go through the bill very quickly so people understand what the honourable member is trying to do. He is basically saying that any person under the age of 19 who is in possession of unlit tobacco on school property can be searched by a principal or a school board employee. If the school board employee or principal thinks that this child of 13, 15, 17, whatever, has unlit tobacco on their premises, the teacher or the principal or whoever can search that student. I'm not sure, as legislators, we want to give that kind of power to principals or any other

school board employees, to search people because they believe they have unlit tobacco.

It goes on to say that in the event there is a search and there is unlit tobacco found on the young person under the age of 19, the principal then has to — it says in the legislation “must” — withdraw the student from his or her regular classes, withdraw the student from his or her regular school activities after classes and put them in an addiction program. Excuse me? An addiction program for someone who’s carrying a pack of cigarettes I think is a bit beyond the bounds.

Then it says if the student is found to be in possession of tobacco on a second offence — get a load of this: Young Julie or young Charlie who walks into school, in grade 9 or 10, and for a second time there’s reason to believe that this young person has tobacco, they’re going to get searched by the principal or by a school board employee, and if they’re found to be in possession of unlit tobacco a second time, the principal is going to expel the student and write a report to the police. Give me a break here.

I can just see this young person applying for a job after they’re finished college or university. They make their first application and there’s a little part at the bottom that says, “Do you have any kind of record with the police?” You can’t lie. Most people are honest. They’d say, “Yes, I was caught with unlit tobacco in high school when I was 14 years old.” Give me a break. This is a bit beyond the bounds.

The other thing it does is protect those people who are doing the searches, the board employees, the principal or whoever, from any civil liabilities. In other words, in the event of the search, if the principal or somebody happens to rough up the child in some way, they’re protected from civil liabilities. Excuse me? The police don’t even have that right, so why would we want to give that to a principal? It seems to me that teachers should stick to the business of teaching and principals should stick to the business of being team leaders within schools and not have the authority to become police within the schools or even have powers that are broader than what we give our own police. It goes way beyond the bounds.

1120

The other thing I want to mention quickly in the time I have is that this is the second such bill this member has brought before this House. He introduced a bill on June 12, I believe, of last year as a private member’s bill. It got second reading. This is the important part: His bill, which was a stricter version of this one, got approval on second reading — there weren’t a lot of members in the House that morning. Anyway, the bill passed at second reading. The point I want to make is this: His own government recognized, and after the bill had passed second reading, even it wasn’t crazy enough to adopt the bill. They let the thing die on the order paper, as it should. If the bill passes second reading in the House this morning, I would be extremely surprised if the Mike Harris government, with the Minister of Education, Mr Johnson, allowed this bill to go past second reading.

We’ve already voted on this bill once, it’s got its fair hearing, it’s got its debate in the House, it passed second reading a year ago under a former version, and the government made the decision that I think any responsible government would have done and said, “We’re not going to allow this bill to go beyond the point of debate.”

If the member wants to come back into the House with a bill that speaks to how we deal with the effect of drugs on the youth of our communities, I along with all other members of this assembly — I don’t care what their political stripes are — are more than prepared to deal with that. But to all of a sudden say that because a young person happens to have unlit tobacco in their pockets is a reason to believe they’re carrying all kinds of drugs is really beyond the line.

I want to read out of the briefing note that was supplied with the bill that was sent by Mr Young. I thought, “Wow, this really tells you where this guy’s coming from.” It says, “As well, the police recently made me aware that when we see the teens out in front of high schools smoking cigarettes, we may be witnessing something else.” Like all those young people who are out there smoking cigarettes off school property, because they’re not allowed to smoke on school property, are all doing drugs. Maybe some are, but it’s certainly not the majority.

I, as well as other members in this Legislature, am fairly well connected within my community. When I go to the Ontario high schools there, Timmins H and VS or O’Gorman or Roland Michener, and I see young people standing out there having a cigarette, I don’t see a lot of them doing drugs and I know quite a few of them quite well.

Mr. Young: You can’t see it.

Mr Bisson: He says you can’t see it. Excuse me, all kids there with unlit tobacco who decide to go out for a smoke outside the school property are all out there taking these oils and putting them at the end of their cigarettes and getting stoned — give me a break. That’s not —

Mr Young: You’re naïve.

Mr Bisson: He says I’m naïve. I think you’re naïve. The reality is that most kids in our society are responsible young individuals who are doing nothing different than we did when we were kids. For us as an older generation to come into this House all of a sudden and start implanting our new moral values really doesn’t respect kids for who they are. There is a drug problem within the youth of our community. Nobody denies that. But to somehow say, as he does here in the briefing note, that every kid who’s standing out in front of the school in Ontario who’s smoking a cigarette is taking drugs goes way beyond the limit of what I think is reasonable.

I wish that people in the public would write to Mr Young for this briefing note and have an opportunity to read through it because the entire briefing note says where this member is coming from. He understands there’s a problem, and for that I give him credit. But really he’s going way beyond the bounds when it comes to how to deal with this, and believes the problem to be quite different than what it actually is.

I certainly will not be supporting this legislation and urge other members not to, because it really goes way beyond the limits of what we should be doing in this Legislature when it comes to dealing with this problem.

Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex): It's certainly a pleasure as well to add comment to the debate this morning regarding my colleague from Halton Centre's private member's bill. At the outset I want to congratulate him. The member continually demonstrates extreme diligence in pursuits and educational matters and is no stranger to the ministry. I think that's indicative, not only of his interest in representing his constituents but certainly his interest in bringing his perspective to the Minister of Education, to myself and to the ministry on behalf of the people of Halton Centre.

I congratulate him in that context and also congratulate him for his continuous work with the ministry in an effort to address concerns in areas of objection through the previous submission. I think he should be congratulated for finding some flexibility in that regard. He indicated in his opening comments the degree to which that has been achieved.

He should be congratulated as well in that he continues to seek opportunities to improve the learning environment of young people in this province, and in that context the member has attempted to craft his bill in a framework that is very supportive of and perhaps complementary to the government's objectives in terms of putting student needs first, and the protection and interests of teachers in this province, by supporting our front-line teachers and ensuring that their time is devoted to academic pursuits and not pursuits that detract from the classroom, and also about our objective in investing in the classroom itself and ensuring that our schools in this province are places of academic excellence.

The member for Halton Centre has undoubtedly — I think other members have addressed this as well — taken a very aggressive stance on issues. I don't see fault in anyone taking that point of view and being aggressive in terms of the issues that he feels are important to himself, and clearly, as he indicated this morning, issues that are important to parents, students and the education community in his area of responsibility.

I congratulate him on that front because he has come forward in a very contentious area, an area that some would not want to address. He's examining the issue of substance abuse — the possession of tobacco — and in part has attempted to highlight what he believes are the inconsistencies in laws that exist between the sale of tobacco product, possession and the location of use of tobacco product by students in this province.

Very clearly there's a focus here that's one of not only just being local in nature, as he's indicated, but one that meets a broader policy perspective and one that perhaps addresses the inconsistencies that exist today. As well, as we heard last week, the member from Halton Centre has attempted to address the area of exclusion, which has reference in the Education Act, but typically, from a practical perspective, the only area —

Interjection.

Mr Smith: I hear the member for Oriole carrying on, as he typically does. As a former trustee he will know that, practically speaking, school boards only recognize suspension and expulsion, as it applies to the Education Act. Now, there are areas in other school boards where that grey area has been addressed by individuals and individual school boards, but very clearly the member is attempting to bring some conclusion to that issue. I again congratulate him on his efforts as very clearly, collectively, we have to be satisfied that our existing prevention or anticipated prevention and intervention initiatives that we establish for our school communities, the goals we want to see achieved in those regards, are in fact being achieved.

Quite frankly, there is very much more we can do. I conclude by saying to the member for Halton Centre that his work is valuable in terms of the ministry's review of zero tolerance violence policies and initiatives that assist our students in the classroom and assist them in healthy lifestyles while in that education community.

Mr David Caplan (Oriole): It's a pleasure to join the debate today on Bill 30. There are a couple of points I will be making.

First of all, nobody in this House, and I don't think anybody in our society, is in favour of substance abuse or addiction. In fact, the member in his briefing note that he forwarded to everybody says he believes one of the problems in our society is that we're inclined towards addiction. It is strange that he and his government would support the Mike Harris gambling halls and the expansion of casino gambling in Ontario, which has a severe problem with addiction. There is inconsistency between what the member is saying and what the actions of his government are. I know that the member is earnest in his beliefs and I know that he will now be opposing the government on its gambling policies.

I will not be supporting this bill. I'll just say that at the outset, and in fact I'm going to talk in a number of areas.

The first and the greatest flaw with this bill comes down to funding. There is no money for alternative programs today. Bill 30 calls for alternative programs, guidance counsellors, all kinds of great stuff. I support all of those. But the government's cutting formula, the formula that the parliamentary assistant was talking about supporting schools and classrooms — I'm really pleased to have the opportunity to follow the gentleman from Middlesex. It's interesting that in elementary schools you get one guidance counsellor for 5,000 students. Can you tell me in any seriousness that one guidance counsellor for 5,000 students is going to achieve the aims and objectives of Bill 30? It's absolute nonsense that the member for Halton Centre or any other members would believe that if you cut the funding and don't provide the resources, you can actually mandate these things and have them happen in the schools.

1130

I'd like to give you a quote from Bryn Davies, principal at General Brock High School in Burlington, referring to

Bill 30. He says: "That's absurd. We can't afford a separate classroom. Where's he" — Mr Young — "getting the staffing to do this? Guidance counsellors have many other responsibilities school wide and they are not generally assigned to the classroom."

Interesting. In fact, the government's funding formula, the cutting formula, is eliminating vice-principals in droves. Principals are being twinned between schools. So you don't even necessarily have a principal in the school; you have a principal supervising multiple schools.

The Minister of Education and Training advocated this, if you will believe it: that principals return to working in the classroom, in other words, become part-time principals. They'll have the full-time responsibilities of principals but they'll do some teaching as well to make up for the cuts to funding that this government has imposed on our classrooms in Ontario.

Again, the aims and objectives of the bill might be to control substance abuse, but when you don't have the people, if you don't have the proper resources, the proper time, the support of vice-principals in schools, the guidance counsellors who are required, the psychologists, the support staff, how are you actually going to be able to address any of the concerns in this bill?

I have a quote here from Sheila Flook, a trustee at the Halton District School Board. She says of Bill 30: "The bill has a flavour of dictatorship" — not surprising when you talk about this government. "I like the idea of strengthening school policy, but who is going to monitor the students? Will the board get extra funding?" I think the answer is, we all know, a resounding no. This government is more interested in taking away funding.

This legislation is a repetition of other pieces of legislation which exist: the Food and Drugs Act, the controlled drugs and substances act. In fact, this bill defines "substance" as follows: "a substance, whether or not a restricted drug within the meaning of the Food and Drugs Act...that has an effect on a person's physical or mental functioning if consumed or ingested in any way...." Interesting: a food or substance that's ingested in any way that has a physical or mental impairment on people. I assume the member is talking about a drug like caffeine, found in coffee or Coca-Cola. I assume the member is talking about cholesterol, which has a physical impairment.

Here you've got a kid, he has some lunch, drinks a Coca-Cola, has a hamburger and fries and is in contravention of Bill 30.

Mr Young: That's preposterous.

Mr Caplan: Yes, I know. This bill is preposterous, absolutely preposterous, and the member agrees with me.

Mr Young: You're a disgrace.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Halton Centre. Order. These words become a personal attack to the individual, and you shouldn't do that. You know that.

Mr Caplan: This bill removes the discretion of principals and teachers. In our schools now, principals have discretion whether or not to exclude or suspend students; absolutely they do. I'll quote the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education, Mr Froese, who says:

"One of the most important roles of the decision-maker, whether it be a president of a company, a judge or a principal, is the ability to exercise discretion when needed. I believe the bill limits the principal from exercising that discretion.... A key function of a principal is the ability to exercise discretion and make appropriate decisions based on circumstances. Exceptional situations occur in many facets of life, and I believe our public policies must reflect that."

That was in regard to Bill 134, the one that was voted on in second reading, the precursor to Bill 30.

I think I've shown that this is an absolutely ridiculous bill, because of the funding cuts of this government, because of the removal of discretionary ability from principals and because of the definition of "substance." This bill deserves ridicule, not support, and I hope all members will vote against it.

Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie): I'm pleased to rise to speak to this bill this morning. I want to commend my colleague for having the courage to bring this important piece of legislation forward. John Stott, the noted ethicist, said, "There is a dearth of leadership in our society and a set of massive problems," and it's so true. I don't think there is a member of this Legislature who is not daily faced with the many problems that are faced by people in our constituencies.

I'm sure all of us, on a regular basis, have meetings with parents who are trying in some way to support, to meet the needs of their children, whether they have learning disabilities, whether they find themselves in difficulties with the law or whether there is substance abuse. There are many problems in our society today that parents are struggling to deal with. Those of us who have children know there is no problem so massive as the problem that is being faced by our children, because so often we feel powerless in being able to come alongside and provide the necessary assistance.

I believe what this bill does, in its intention and in its reality, is to provide authority for teachers, for principals, as well as parents, to promote an environment of cooperation between those who are in contact with children on a daily basis — and the reality is that many times it's principals, teachers and employees at the school who see more of our children than often parents do. That's a sad commentary, but that is also a reality in today's world. So if a teacher or a principal realizes that a child is in trouble or on the brink of disaster in their lives in terms of making wrong choices, does it not make sense that we, as a Legislature, provide them with the authority to bring that information forward, to bring it to the attention of the parents and, where necessary, in the event of substance abuse, to bring it to the attention of the police as well so these matters can be dealt with?

We just have to pick up the newspaper today, the front page of the Toronto Star, a new report by 77 United States universities, and I quote: "While 13% of grade 8 girls reported smoking in 1991, the report shows, that figures increased to 21% in 1996." It goes on to say this is "a faster increase than that for boys." And it goes on to say,

"And nearly 17% of grade 8 girls used marijuana in 1996, compared with just over 5% in 1991." That's today's paper.

Constantly we read in the newspapers or we hear throughout our constituencies that this problem of substance abuse is continuing to grow. It's not on the decline. Contrary to what members opposite, in their debate on this, are suggesting to people, that this is not an important issue — as the member for Cochrane South, I believe, said, "This is killing a fly with a shovel" — I don't believe parents who have lost a child through substance abuse could agree that this is not an important issue.

It's been suggested that this bill goes too far. Is it going too far to give teachers, principals and the police the authority to deal with an issue that will threaten the lives of young people — and we're dealing here with young people in our schools — who are just learning how to make decisions, who are just learning about the reality of the world they will one day have the responsibility to live in and make choices in?

1140

The school is the place where they should be learning that there are limits, that there are responsibilities, that there are consequences to actions. Is it too far for us to go as a Legislature to provide that kind of authority, that kind of responsibility to the teachers and principals to whom we entrust our children? Is it too far to ensure that information about children and their potential problems and the wrong choices they are making is shared with parents? I don't think so. Better to bring the parents alongside early and alert them to the choices their children are making so that those parents who have, first, the parental responsibility, but, more important surely, the parental love for the child can be involved in the decisions that are being made.

Is it going too far to ensure that there are consequences for students who are making those wrong choices? Yes, there is the reality that perhaps they will be separated from their fellow students for a period of time during which they will have the opportunity to contemplate their choices, to contemplate the decisions they are making.

Is it going too far to ensure that through our school system there is in place the appropriate counselling for those students who have made wrong choices and who are experiencing substance abuse? I don't believe so. I don't believe it's going too far. I do believe it is taking the necessary leadership role that we in this Legislature have been given by those who have sent us here. I speak of parents and I speak of siblings and I speak of students, who also want an environment in their schools that is conducive to learning, to friendship, to enjoyment of each other.

I commend my colleague for bringing this bill forward. I will be supporting it. I believe my constituents would want me to support it. I encourage every member of this House to consider seriously what this bill will do for them, for the people in their constituency, for the children of this province.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Let me put on the record first that if I'm talking funny this morning, it's not through substance abuse. I just came from the dentist.

Mr Agostino: That's abuse.

Ms Churley: That's what I call abuse. We should do something about those dentists. Perhaps that could be the member's next villain. I know, Speaker, you went through this yourself a couple of days ago, even worse than I, so I will try my best here.

I will not be supporting this bill. I actually have to confess here that I inadvertently supported the bill that, thank God, died on the order paper. I believe I did support it on first or second reading. I didn't mean to. It's one of those mistakes. It was a mistake, frankly, because —

Mr Young: After five years of your government —

Ms Churley: No, I don't think it had anything to do with the five years in my government. If the member wanted, I could spend these whole six minutes talking about the things I'm proud of that we did as a government, and will be for the rest of my life. I think members from all parties, when they get into government, can and do do things that they are proud of, and to just say because it's New Democrats who once held power in this province and never did anything good is at best arrogant.

Going back to why I inadvertently supported the last bill, I frankly didn't read certain aspects of it and I supported the overall direction. There are certain aspects to it that afterwards — I wasn't in here for the debate. I came in and voted on it and found out after that I was not happy with certain aspects, and this was one of them. Although I'm very concerned about this issue, I don't think this is the right approach, for a variety of reasons. A couple of them have been mentioned by the member for Oriole.

Even if you were to put this measure in place, education has been cut. There are fewer counsellors in the schools. There are going to be fewer of them than there are now. Some of the municipalities that used to have the police budget taken care of by the province are now going to have to pick it up. It is just absurd to think that the police — and there are going to be school counsellors there who are going to be running into a school because the kid was caught with an unlit cigarette. It just isn't realistic.

It may be a public relations bill, because it isn't going to go through. The government isn't going to let it go through. This particular member speaks to a particular constituency, and he's doing that again in the case of this bill. That's okay. His concern for young people is something that I congratulate. We have different approaches to how we deal with some of these problems, but I do want to say that I share some of the same concerns.

I don't like to see young people smoking. I think it's a big problem that so many young people are smoking, the article that the member for York-Mackenzie read earlier about grade 8 students in the United States smoking and the fact that more and more girls are smoking, the fact that lung cancer in women, since women started to smoke as much as or more than men, is going up.

This is a really serious public health problem in not just our province, but indeed our country and across the world. More and more people are smoking. We know that the big cigarette companies, when they start losing a market share in one area, will start marketing to different areas, in developing countries and to kids in sort of underground, careful ways. We know that's happening, and it's a major, major public health problem and a huge expense of billions of dollars to our health care system. It's very sad to see, it seems to me, the age of smokers getting younger and younger every year.

I do think there are two issues being mixed up here, and that is the inference in this bill that if a child or a young person is caught with an unlit cigarette or if you see a bunch of kids smoking or with cigarettes in the school yard, something else is going on.

Certainly there is substance abuse in schools.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): — yes or no?

Ms Churley: I am not supporting the bill. I said that at the outset.

There are two issues here. You have children who do smoke marijuana. We know that. We have children who drink alcohol. Perhaps this is to some Tory members sacrilege to say, but I believe that alcohol in some cases, and studies show this, can be more harmful to people than marijuana. I'm not condoning one over the other, but I'm certainly saying that we see the abuse of alcohol which often leads to domestic violence.

I have a daughter, and I remember she went through a very hard time. A film was made, and she is very embarrassed about it now. I went through an incredible struggle with my daughter, who had a very difficult adolescence. You can imagine the agony and torment I went through over those years. I had the opportunity to witness a troubled teen and her peer group at the time, and what I saw in some cases was not pretty and was very worrisome.

I'm lucky. I feel that I did all the right things when my daughter was little and she had enough grounding and enough love there that when she went through that, she came out the other side perfectly. She is now an absolutely wonderful young woman who has gone back to school and is doing all kinds of things with her life.

I have sympathy for so many other parents out there, because when you're going through that with your child, your biggest fear is they're not going to come back, and sometimes it happens to kids. I believe, frankly, that goes right throughout society, from low- to middle- to high-income, and there is a whole variety, a gamut, of reasons why. Some parents are more equipped in some cases to deal with it than others.

So I am not supporting the bill because I don't believe this is the right approach and it's mixing up two issues. I don't think this is actually going to change anything. I believe these are serious problems that have to be addressed. I support the fact that the member, whose policies I generally don't support at all — we have very different approaches to how we deal with these things, but I do support the concept that there are problems with kids and substance abuse. I think that we do need, once this bill

dies, to look at other ways to see as a government how we can deal with that.

1150

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): It's great to follow the member for Riverdale and her reflective remarks on the member for Halton Centre's bill. In my estimation, it's probably the best presentation of her own particular dilemmas in dealing with young people and the problems that we as legislators are facing, focusing on this particular problem.

I think the zero tolerance substance bill the member for Halton Centre has introduced today keys in on those concerns of parents who are extremely worried about what is happening to their children when they are attending school or are on their way to or from school. Unlike the dismissive, ridiculing attitude of the member for Oriole, whom I would probably classify as the perpetual classic denier, that there hardly is any problem in this area, there certainly is a problem.

One could question the methodologies, I suspect. That's why we need to have the bill go to committee, in my estimation, because it's dealing with the issue of authority, it's dealing with the issue of substance abuse, which does not include a definition of "caffeine." I don't know why some of these ridiculous comments get included in the discussion of these items.

In my estimation, this is a values bill. We are trained, as adults, as legislators, as members of society trying to gain some kind of handle to present some kind of alternatives —

Interjections.

Mr Hastings: If the member for Oriole would listen for once, maybe he might learn something.

For example, I know the member for Halton Centre and I tomorrow night — I'm involved in some modest fund-raising for the drug abuse resistance education program that Constable Stu Davidson, who is a community services officer, and the city of Toronto police for the last three years have been dealing with, with direct instructions, in our elementary schools, both Catholic and public, to create a preventive mode for our young people so that they will have a strong values foundation when they're dealing with substance abuse and with violence in their families and in their communities. It is taught directly by police officers and the teaching community is glad to welcome police officers like Stu Davidson into the schools because it reinforces values that are required today to help and guide our young people.

What we're hearing from across the way is basically that the principals and teachers do not want this particular responsibility, do not want anything to do with it. I suggest to those members that they go out and talk to members of the teaching community, to principals, and they will tell you, yes, they do have some concerns with how the authority may be applied, but they recognize that they need additional tools to deal with this very fundamental dilemma.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Halton Centre, you have two minutes.

Mr Young: Just to sum up, the member for Hamilton East obviously hasn't read the bill. He doesn't know what he's talking about. He's misrepresented it very badly. The bill does not kick anyone out of school.

Mr Caplan: On a point of order, Speaker: I believe the member claims that my colleague misrepresented. That is unparliamentary. I ask for that comment to be withdrawn.

Mr Young: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Could you turn the clock back so I can have my two minutes?

The Acting Speaker: Give him his two minutes.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. There is certain language in the House that we don't accept. The word that you mentioned is not acceptable and I would ask you to withdraw it.

Mr Young: Withdrawn, Mr Speaker.

The member for Hamilton East is mistaken about the bill. He talked about the bill kicking our youth out of school. The bill is designed to keep our youth in school, and I changed it from last year after debate in this House because I realized that some students who abuse substances actually want to get kicked out of school. This does the opposite.

The member for Cochrane South says the bill would create a police record. It's not true. There would never be a police record unless a criminal charge were laid and there was a conviction. I say to the member, don't be naïve about substance abuse. One of the members who lives in Ottawa and represents one of the areas around Ottawa just came across to me. He met with student leaders recently, 12 of them, and he asked them, "Have any of you witnessed any substance abuse?" All 12 of them said, "Yes, I have seen students smoking marijuana inside the schools."

Young people today say that substance abuse helps them fit in. They're getting mixed messages from parents and educators who on the one hand say that doing drugs is not cool, but they see their older, cooler peers doing drugs. They see it on television, they see it in movies and they know many of their favourite music groups are substance abusers. I hear that some film stars actually take huge sums of cash to smoke on screen to promote tobacco use.

I leave you with this thought. It is easier to nip substance abuse in the bud than it is to deal with it once it has become an addiction.

I heard one 17-year-old recovering addict in Halton tell parents recently at a Parent Watch meeting that it almost killed her. She said that most parents underreact. They think their child would never become an addict.

Here I quote her: "Your future's dying. I see kids doing drugs and drinking every day and society says it's no big deal."

I leave you with one final question, my colleagues in the House: Is this the legacy that we want to leave our children?

The Acting Speaker: The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): We will deal first with ballot item number 17, standing in the name of Mr Stewart.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 SUR UNE TOLÉRANCE ZÉRO EN MATIÈRE D'ABUS DE SUBSTANCES

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): We will now deal with ballot item number 18, standing in the name of Mr Young.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre): I request that the bill be referred to the standing committee on justice.

The Acting Speaker: Is it agreed? Agreed.

All matters pertaining to private members' business having been debated, I will now leave the chair and the House will resume at 1:30 of the clock this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1158 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

EMERY SCHOOL COUNCIL

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I want to address my comments to the Minister of Education, the education system and the new funding formula. I especially want to readdress to the minister the concern which has been brought to his attention and to my attention by the Emery school council.

In February this year the parent council at Emery Collegiate asked to meet with the minister or someone from his staff, and they are still waiting to hear after three months. The answer they got after the first three months was that his schedule was totally full. They are frustrated because the minister and the Premier and a lot of the other ministers have been asked for consultation, to meet with the people in the various communities. Education has been taken very seriously by the parent-teacher council at Emery and in every other community. They feel frustrated that they cannot get a positive response from the minister to come and meet them in their community, to apprise the Premier and the minister of the concerns they have with the new funding formula, with the cuts to education, with cuts to the various programs.

I would ask the Premier and the minister to let me know and come into our community and hear from those people

and not be treated like another special interest group. I hope, Minister, that you will meet with this particular council.

PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): "If you lived in Kapuskasing, what would you do if you're a parent of a child needing an emergency operation when no anaesthetist is available and the air ambulance is already responding to another call?" So begins the letter that is addressed to both Premier Mike Harris and to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien.

Constituents in Cochrane North have organized a letter-writing campaign to draw our attention, as legislators, to the dire shortage of doctors. I want some of these letters delivered to the Premier personally today and urge the Premier to take some time to read these letters and respond. In particular, the Premier should pay attention to the common refrain in these letters, "Why should citizens in the north be treated differently from those in the southern part of the province?" Dr Robert Ng-A. Fook, who practises in Kapuskasing, stated, "There already exists a two-tiered system of medicine in Ontario — one for the south and one for the north." Indeed, why should these citizens from the north be treated differently?

The situation in my riding of Kapuskasing is absolutely critical and getting worse every day. In addition, the letters recognize the dedication and commitment of our five local doctors, who accomplish the workload of 14 doctors. Their efforts are indeed appreciated.

Finally, I want to take the opportunity to congratulate Mariette Guilotte, one of the key organizers of this letter-writing campaign, for her tireless effort in bringing this issue to the fore. You can rest assured that the thousands of letters that I've received over the last couple of weeks will be delivered to the Premier, and hopefully he'll share this with the Minister of Health and resolve this issue between Ontario and Ottawa.

FIESTA WEEK

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): This week the community of Oshawa will kick off its 37th annual cultural festival, known as Fiesta Week, with a parade of floats and marching bands, followed by awards and six days of international pavilion displays. As part of Oshawa's cultural heritage, Fiesta Week brings together the people of Oshawa for a week's celebration of our city's multicultural heritage.

Fiesta provides over 100,000 people with an opportunity to examine our community's diverse culinary, dancing and musical talents from a wide variety of multicultural backgrounds. During the third week of June, various cultural communities in Oshawa will operate pavilions which will feature the food, dance and entertainment of their particular culture.

This year's annual parade on Father's Day, with over 2,000 expected participants, will make its way around

Lakeview Park in the south of Oshawa and complement the Oshawa Waterfront Festival occurring this weekend. New this year on Oshawa's beautiful waterfront is the waterfront festival. The festival will feature music, kids' events, fireworks and many other events. This festival will occur this Friday, adding to the week-long celebrations of Fiesta Week.

The numerous dedicated volunteers, along with the Oshawa Folk Arts Council, have worked diligently throughout the year to make Fiesta Week the success it has been each year, and I'm confident that 1998 will be no exception. I would personally like to congratulate all those volunteers for the thousands of hours they contribute in making the waterfront festival and Fiesta Week happen.

I'd like to invite all members of this House and all the people of Ontario to visit Oshawa and participate in one of Ontario's premier summer festivals.

CHILD PROSTITUTION

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): As the House knows, on May 28, Bill 18, my private member's bill entitled the Protection of Children involved in Prostitution Act, was debated at second reading and passed unanimously. It was referred to the standing committee on social development for discussion.

There is an enormous amount of concern all across Ontario with regard to this issue of children being sexually exploited or abused through prostitution. Several social service agencies, various religious denominations, police chiefs across Ontario and cities and regional governments have passed resolutions or sent letters of support, ensuring that this bill gets to committee. Chief Julian Fantino from the London Police Service sent me an Agenda for Action which was the minutes of a conference on the sexual exploitation of children. It states, "Every child is entitled to full protection from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse."

I concur with the report's findings. I'm sure the members of the House concur with the report's findings. The dilemma we have here is that on Monday I will be asking the social development committee to discuss this at public hearings across Ontario. I believe it is a problem not only in Toronto or in Sudbury, it is a problem all across Ontario. It needs our debate. It needs committee study. I'm asking the social development committee to study it.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I have a letter from Lyn King of Sault Ste Marie, who says that she has a child with attention deficit. She goes on to say, and I quote:

"My son is nine years old. My son was given Ritalin when he was five and was overdosed...the result was almost fatal for my son. The board of education in Sault Ste Marie provided me support and gave my son a teacher's assistant for his next two years....This year, because of cutbacks, my son has had to struggle without the aid of an assistant. The teacher has 29 students in the

classroom. The children sitting in the front row can touch the chalk boards with their hands. At least five children in this classroom pose behavioural difficulties."

She says that parents are "being pressured to medicate their children on Ritalin because teachers cannot cope with the large class sizes and the challenges these students face," and that 29 students in a class is "the norm across our city.... We would not subject animals to this kind of confined and limited space, but this government is doing this to our children...."

"Our children have the right to equal opportunity and education in this province. This government is denying them the services they desperately need in order to succeed in education. Studies have indicated that many learning disabled children may end up in conflict with the law because of their academic failures and this government is ensuring their failures. So you save money in education and have to spend the money in the justice system."

Please, the Minister of Education must acknowledge attention deficit —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you.

AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, ALS, is a rapidly progressive neuromuscular disease which is better known to many as Lou Gehrig's disease. ALS is a fatal disease and kills two to three Canadians every day.

ALS victims remain mentally sharp. ALS attacks the motor neurons in the spinal cord and lower brain, which control the voluntary muscles throughout the body. When these motor neurons die as result of ALS, the ability to control muscle movement is lost until its victims are no longer able to move, eat and eventually breathe. There are approximately 600 people with ALS registered with the ALS Society of Ontario and 2,000 to 3,000 Canadians suffering from the disease.

There are many issues individuals with ALS face in their struggle with the disease — waiting for the approval of new drugs on the market, access to assistive technology clinics and access to assistive equipment.

June is ALS Awareness Month. The ALS Society of Canada, the provincial units and the chapters and support groups raise funds in their community during the month of June through the cornflower campaign. The blue cornflower is the official ALS society flower and symbolizes hope for a cure. In the last three years, the ALS society has contributed over \$1 million to research. Please support this campaign and offer hope for people with this dreadful disease.

1340

GAMBLING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): The news reports continue to come in about the damaging effect of gambling on our society.

"Niagara Falls residents with low incomes are gambling in commercial casinos with increasing frequency since Casino Niagara opened its doors, a study has concluded.

"Released yesterday by the Addiction Research Foundation, the study found that, one year after the casino opened, residents earning under \$30,000 a year had dramatically increased their visits to commercial casinos....

"I think this is an indicator that we need to put a hold on this and get an idea of what the real cost will be," said Wayne Olson, a Toronto member of the Ontario Coalition Against Gambling Expansion."

Just a couple of weeks ago another story: "The number of Windsor-area residents seeking help for gambling problems has increased almost 10% over last year...." This study was by the Canadian Foundation on Compulsive Gambling.

In Nova Scotia: "A new study released by the Nova Scotia government on Friday shows gambling is out of control and addicts are not getting the help they need, an anti-gambling group said."

In the New York Times: A story about a new rite of young people becoming involved in gambling.

Look, this is sheer madness that, with all of these reports coming in, with all of these problems piling up, the Mike Harris government would be opening the new Mike Harris gambling halls, the so-called charity casinos.

Stop this sheer madness. Enough is enough.

PAULINE JUNIOR SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I was delighted to have the chance to join this morning at Pauline public school in the riding of Dovercourt with a group of grade 4 students in room 6 and their teacher, Martha Davis, as they began the planting of shrubs around the school, which is one big main step in the process that this group of young people has been involved in to get money and attention for the need for a new playground at their school. They have produced a book, a copy of which I have here, which outlines the experiences they've gone through.

It's quite an amazing story, because they certainly have learned a lot as they have gone through this in terms of how you go about designing a playground, how you go about raising the awareness, not just at the political level but through organizations like Friends of the Environment, an organization supported by Canada Trust, and the Evergreen Foundation, groups that they lobbied and from which they then received funding.

They've gone through this. It's been an incredible learning experience for them, for the whole school and for the whole community that they've managed to involve. They have done, quite frankly, their part. They have managed to raise over \$10,000, which is being spent on improving the playground with respect to shrubs and trees that will be planted. They have learned a lot about the political process in terms of what they went through and they obviously are looking now to the school board and to

the government to also provide the larger amounts of money that are needed for the full playground development that is there.

I just want today to congratulate them for what they have done and for the awareness that they have brought to all of us about what can be done when young people come together like this.

KELLEY ADVERTISING

Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North): I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the 85th anniversary of Kelley Advertising in Hamilton. Founded in 1913 by Russell T. Kelley, who also served the province of Ontario as MPP for the riding of Hamilton-Wentworth and Minister of Health from 1946 to 1950. Kelley was Hamilton's Citizen of the Year for 1944 and one of the pioneers of Canadian advertising. His agency, originally called the Hamilton Advertisers' Agency, was the first business of its kind in the area.

For the past 85 years, Kelley Advertising has operated from its Hamilton head office despite the fact that many of its clients do business across the country from Halifax to Vancouver and in many countries around the world. Russell Kelley was a big fan of Hamilton. In fact, when asked one time what he thought Toronto's best attribute was, he replied, "The 5 o'clock train to Hamilton."

Jack McNie, also a great community supporter and co-chair of the Committee for Hamilton Place, former MPP for Hamilton West and Minister of Colleges and Universities, held the reins at Kelley Advertising from the mid-1950s to 1972, upholding Russell Kelley's commitment to Hamilton and our province.

That commitment has lived on as the advertising agency remains not only a cornerstone of the Hamilton business community but an important contributor to a number of causes from the Victorian Order of Nurses to the YMCA, McMaster University, Mohawk College, area hospitals and many other local organizations.

On behalf of the people of Hamilton-Wentworth, I'd like to extend my regards to Kelley Advertising and its staff on 85 years in Hamilton, a milestone for both Kelley Advertising and indeed the community.

DROWNING DEATHS

Mr Peter North (Elgin): It is with sadness that I inform the Legislature of a tragedy that occurred in Elgin county over the past week.

Our community has lost three young men as a result of accidents on the pier in Port Stanley. These young men unfortunately passed away as a result of drowning.

I want to extend condolences on behalf of me and my family and the people of Elgin county to their families and to their friends and schoolmates in east Elgin and in St Thomas. I want to take an opportunity to pay tribute to a number of young people who were present at both of these incidents and risked their own lives to try to save the lives of these young men. I also want to pay tribute to the Port

Stanley Fire Department and the OPP in the area for the work they did as well.

I want to take an opportunity to encourage all members to remind people who live in their communities to understand and be aware of water safety and the importance of water safety, whether it's a family pool, a farm pond or a small lake that's in their community. Make sure you take the time to remind people over the coming summer. It's very, very important.

CORRECTION

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I rise to correct my record of yesterday, referring to Hansard, page 1546, where I am quoted as saying, "The member for Scarborough East last night during the show attacked the character and credibility of the principal of this school, and he was not there to be able to defend himself. In fact, he went so far as to call this gentleman a liar..."

The member for Scarborough East has asked me to review the tape and assures me that he did not use the word "liar." He has just provided me with a copy of the tape. I have not had the time to review it, but I accept his word on that, and I apologize for that mistake and retract that, correct that record. However, the remainder of my concerns and my request to the Premier to review his conduct still stand.

MEMBER'S PRIVILEGE

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph): Mr Speaker, on a point of privilege: Yesterday a question was raised in this House and it questioned my personal integrity and referred to my conduct as minister. The Hansard record must be corrected. I am not nor was I found guilty, as stated in this House, of having broken the law. Charges laid against a private company were dismissed by a justice of the peace based on an argument that the company had committed an officially induced error.

I believe it is important to assure my colleagues here in the House, for the record, that never did I indicate to any individual or organization that they may operate, in defiance of the law, without a permit.

In a recent dispute between two private parties, where I had no formal standing and could not participate, an accused party argued that I had led them to believe the law had been overlooked. That accusation is false. I want my colleagues here in the House to be informed that I was unable to attend a hearing on a certain day because I was right here voting in this House. I was later denied the ability to testify before the justice of the peace. My voice was never heard.

I am an elected member, given the honour and privilege to participate in determining legislation for this province. I take that responsibility very seriously —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you, member for Guelph. I wasn't here yesterday, and I apologize to the members. It's not a point of order. I appreciate

the fact that you have brought it forward. I caution members that when we talk about personalities, these are the kinds of things that come into play. To the member for Guelph, it's not in order and I'm going to rule that it's not a point of privilege either.

1350

UNITED EMPIRE LOYALISTS' DAY

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I believe we have unanimous consent for one representative of each recognized party in the House to make a short statement with respect to United Empire Loyalists' Day, and I ask this consent as a very proud descendant of the United Empire Loyalist families.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Do we have agreement on that? Agreed.

Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough): It is indeed my pleasure to rise today to recognize the first United Empire Loyalists' Day in Ontario. I want to thank all the members of this House for allowing me the opportunity to pay tribute to Ontario's Loyalist heritage.

Earlier this morning it was my privilege, along with the Speaker and many of our colleagues, to help in raising the Loyalist Grand Union Banner on the courtesy flagpole in front of the Legislative Building. This flag has not flown in an official capacity in Ontario since the early 19th century. Today we fly it in recognition of the role that the Loyalists played and that their descendants continue to play in the development of the province of Ontario.

It was also my pleasure to take part in a presentation by the Archives of Ontario to the Ontario branch of the United Empire Loyalists' Association. In recognition of June 19, the archives, led by Ian Wilson, has made public the Inspector General's register. This register was the official list of all those making claims for either land or privileged status as Loyalists in Upper Canada. Since it was the Inspector General who was responsible for sanctioning privilege in Upper Canada, we can assume that this is the most complete list of United Empire Loyalists in existence, and of enormous historical significance. This document is on display today in the main lobby of this building.

I would like to thank Ian Wilson and his staff at the archives, in particular Fawn Stratford-Devai and John Barton, for all their hard work in putting together today's display and helping make Loyalists' Day significant for so many people. I recommend that all members take in this display.

Loyalists' Day gives us all a chance to reflect on the contribution of the Loyalists to the development of Ontario. It is worth noting that our land tenure system, civil law system and, most important, our system of responsible government were brought to Upper Canada by the Loyalists. These systems are still in place today.

I have said before and I think it bears repeating: The Loyalist heritage led directly to the development of this great country's bilingual, multicultural and regional

tradition under the unifying context of a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy. This makes us very different from our neighbours to the south, and I believe it is a difference that we should all celebrate.

On Saturday night I was honoured to be at the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada's annual general meeting, which was held in Kingston. Over 200 Loyalists from across our country gathered together to elect a new executive and to conduct other business of the association. I wish to pay tribute to the outgoing president of the association, Bernice Flett, who is with us today. Bernice was instrumental in helping me with my private member's bill. Her cooperation and dedication as president of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada will inspire all present and future members to contribute their talents to preserving the legacy and history of the Loyalists.

I would also like to thank everyone who helped make today a success. Dennis Clark, our Sergeant at Arms, and his staff were extremely helpful, as were Karyn Leonard and her staff at the interparliamentary and public relations branch. On behalf of everyone involved in organizing today, I want to say a sincere thank you.

I hope tomorrow, June 19, all members of this House will take some time and reflect on the sacrifices made by the Loyalists when they came to Upper Canada, and as well reflect on the contributions that Loyalists made in making this province and indeed our country one of the best places in the world to live.

At this point I would ask that all United Empire Loyalists in the galleries rise and be recognized by this Legislature.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): On behalf of my Liberal colleagues I want to join our friend the member for Hastings-Peterborough in paying tribute to all of those who have come here today to pay tribute to an enormously important part of Ontario's heritage and historical tradition.

I want to in a personal way congratulate my friend and neighbour the member for Hastings-Peterborough for all the work he's done over the last number of months to make Loyalists' Day the reality that it now is.

There is no doubt, as the member has said, that United Empire Loyalism is part of the basic fabric and is very much the foundation of Ontario or Upper Canada, as it was called. There is on all of the insignia in this province an inscription. I won't quote the Latin — my Latin isn't that good any more — but I believe the motto of the province is in English, "Loyal in the beginning, so let us remain." It's a nice phrase and it's an important phrase.

Loyalism and what we celebrate today are not just a pageant, though I want to congratulate these people, as I was unfortunately not able to be with the member and others this morning at the session. It is important at a certain level to highlight the pageantry. Our American friends do it so well that we should not be afraid or ashamed to do our part.

It is really important, I think, for this Legislature and the province we represent to understand what this all means. These Loyalists were refugees and they were

counterrevolutionaries. It's hard to remember and hard to believe — and many of us don't want to think about this — but this province of ours was born 210 or 215 years ago by refugees, by counterrevolutionaries, by thousands of people who, as it happened, were to leave behind one of the most successful and dynamic economies and polities the world has ever known, and they headed northward into the rough-hewn bush of what was almost a no-man's land. Voltaire had called it "quelques arpents de neige," a few acres of snow.

These Loyalists left some of the best agricultural lands of North America for some not apparently very attractive country. They did it on principle because they felt very strongly that what their brethren in the 13 colonies were doing was fundamentally wrong and mistaken. So they were refugees, they were counterrevolutionaries. They weren't just all the élite, they weren't just all upscale former Harvard and Yale men. As the member points out, if you look at the documentation that Ian Wilson, the provincial archivist, and others have made available, in the main the Loyalists were everyday people, as we would now call them. If you look at some of that material, you will see, in ways that most of us don't understand, the incredible hardship that these regular folks experienced as they moved northward into this uncharted bush.

I think in the antiseptic, modern world of the late 20th century, it is a useful thing for all of us, particularly those of us who purport to provide some leadership to the community 210 years later, to go back to our roots and to understand the sacrifice that that expression of loyalty involved. It was not a choice without painful consequence.

It is important as well to understand that Joseph Brant and people like Brant were also Loyalists. Aboriginals by the score moved north of the Lakes. So we were refugees, and we walked not just as Europeans, but we walked with people like Joseph Brant and others from the aboriginal community who agreed with our Loyalist fathers and mothers that it was the right thing to do.

I just hope, as we make public policy in the 1990s, and when we look at some of the very contentious issues that face this province and country, we remember some of that. Our beginnings were in rebellion and counterrevolution, and Joseph Brant and people like Brant walked with us north of the Lakes.

When I met Ian Wilson on the steps I said: "Ian, I'm sorry I couldn't go to your presentation; I was with a group of students. As our provincial archivist and a well-known historian, what would you say would be the one lesson you would want these young people from the Beachburg Public School to know about the legacy of Loyalism?" Mr Wilson said, I thought very aptly, "If you remember nothing else, remember that our origins were in that refugee movement." We should never forget that.

We have today the opportunity to understand that there are other rebellions and other revolutions going on across the world, and I hope that this generation is as welcoming today as others were when those Loyalists came north 200-and-some years ago.

A final observation, because the House leader was proud to advertise his loyal roots, as he should be: "Loyal in the beginning, so let us remain." What do you suppose people with names like Cartwright and Macdonell and Brant would want us to be loyal to? I say to the House particularly that I don't think I speak out of turn when I say I think they would want us, like those Loyalist forebears, to be loyal to honour, to duty, to principle and to the notion of loyalty itself.

I would hope, if push comes to shove, that we would have the guts and the fortitude to do as so many of Mr Danford's constituents and some of mine did in those uncertain days 215 years ago, to put everything at risk, to leave it all behind and to walk into an uncertain future because they believed that loyalty to principles like duty and honour were, at the beginning and the end of the day, of fundamental importance.

1400

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On behalf of our caucus, I want to rise in celebration of Loyalists' Day and to congratulate the member for Hastings-Peterborough and the representatives of the United Empire Loyalists' Association here with us this afternoon.

In celebrating the UE Loyalists, we are celebrating the tradition of their loyalty to the crown, which is celebrated and recognized in the Ontario flag, with the Union flag in the corner, but we also celebrate the desire of those courageous women and men who walked and rode north of the Lakes after the American Revolution, the courage they had in meeting the wilderness and beginning anew, beginning a new life. This is the beginning of the tradition that all of us value in Canada and in Ontario, and that is the welcoming reception of those who are fleeing destruction and war, who are indeed refugees and who are seeking a new life, a new beginning after the loss of almost everything.

Many of the Loyalists who came to Ontario, and indeed also came to the Atlantic provinces, were coming with just the clothes on their backs or what they could carry in a cart, because they had in some cases been run off their own land and had to flee for their lives. So many of us, whether we are descendants of United Empire Loyalists, as the member for Hastings-Peterborough and I can claim to be, or whether we are descendants of other refugees or indeed ourselves are refugees, recognize the tradition of this country of welcoming those from abroad who are fleeing war and destruction to seek a new life on these shores.

I want to also recognize, as my friend from Renfrew North did, that it wasn't just those of British heritage who came forward and came north after the American Revolution to demonstrate their loyalty to the crown. It was also members of the Six Nations, Joseph Brant and the other Iroquoian nations who had remained loyal and fought on the side of the British in the American War of Independence, who came north and were welcomed by the aboriginal inhabitants of this area, of Ontario, with the Grand River land grant. The Ojibways welcomed the Iroquoian

peoples to these shores, despite the fact that in some cases in the past they had been on opposite sides of conflicts.

All of us must value our tradition of welcoming those who are fleeing the death and destruction of war. All of us must value the courage it takes to come to a foreign land to make a new beginning. All of us must celebrate that in our heritage, the United Empire Loyalists and all of those refugees who have been welcomed to Ontario and to Canada since the arrival of the United Empire Loyalists.

We must not now succumb to a xenophobia that does not recognize and celebrate the value of the many cultures, the multicultural nature of people who come and make contributions to our society. I know those who celebrate the United Empire Loyalists' Day also celebrate that tradition in Canada and the freedom we owe those courageous people who have made it possible for us to welcome so many other representatives from around the world, to help make ours the cultural mosaic we celebrate in Ontario today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TEXTBOOKS

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): My question is for the Minister of Education. By next Wednesday teachers have to choose about \$75 million worth of textbooks from your approved list. Minister, \$75 million worth of new textbooks should be a good-news story; in fact, it is turning out to be a nightmare. We are flooded with calls from frustrated and angry teachers and principals who say that your list of books is inadequate and that their choices are being too rushed.

They have found virtually no science textbooks on the list. They have found that they can't buy teachers' manuals to go with the textbooks because you don't allow teachers' manuals to be on the list. You don't seem to understand that textbooks aren't useful without support materials for teachers. There are unanswered questions about kindergarten materials and French immersion textbooks and the prices of the books on the list.

Schools need textbooks. They need the dollars to buy them. But you are forcing through a massive purchase, with too little time to make sure that teachers have books that are right for their students.

Minister, this is an easy problem to fix. Will you suspend your June 23 deadline until the list of texts is more complete and there is time to make wise choices?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): The Liberal Party, for some reason, would wish us to suspend this good-news story so that the students do not have textbooks this fall in the classroom. I can tell you I have no intention of doing that. This government wants to see our students get the textbooks this fall. We want to see these students get the textbooks in time for the full year. The reason is because over the years there has not been enough emphasis, through governments

— through the NDP government, through the Liberal government — put on supplying textbooks to our students.

One of the publishers, for example, McGraw Hill, has said, "The terrible lack of learning materials for Ontario students was caused by years of neglect by former governments, which continually ignored the fact that spending on learning materials in Ontario was between 25% and 35% of what is spent in provinces such as Alberta."

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer.

Hon David Johnson: We intend to rectify it. We intend to rectify it for this —

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mrs McLeod: Minister, we agree that textbooks are desperately needed in our classrooms. We agree that you need the money to buy them. We believe those textbooks should be the right books for the students, that they should be of the best quality.

You're not imposing these deadlines because you're concerned about the quality of textbooks to go with your new curriculum. There is only one reason to impose the deadline, and you know it: It's because you want a public relations message for September when the kids come back to school.

If you were concerned about quality, Minister, you would allow the teachers the one simple thing they're asking for. They are asking for time to purchase their books when and if they are satisfied that the textbooks they're choosing are the best for their classes.

If you were concerned about quality, you'd give them the time they need to make the right choices. It's so simple. Teachers haven't even had time to see the textbooks themselves, but they have to make thousands of dollars worth of decisions by next Tuesday.

The Speaker: Question.

Mrs McLeod: Minister, will you allow at least half of your textbook bonanza dollars to be spent next fall, when there is time for careful consideration of the textbooks on —

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon David Johnson: The member calls these "textbook bonanza dollars."

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): They are.

Hon David Johnson: Yes, they are, they are indeed, and they're a sound investment in our young people. To suggest that we should stall and delay and put this off, well, that's just like the Liberal Party.

There is a basic, sound reason for proceeding in September. That's when school starts. In case the critic for the Liberal Party doesn't know when school starts, that's when it starts.

These books have been looked at on the English side by a hundred teachers from the curriculum clearinghouse, on the French side by about the same number of teachers in the Centre de leadership. The teachers have picked these books out, over 160 different books, which will go to the benefit of our students this fall. It's unprecedented, I know, in the history of Ontario, but it's badly needed.

1410

Mrs McLeod: Minister, your new science curriculum starts in September too, but there won't be any science textbooks because there's none on the list. Your new kindergarten curriculum starts in September, but there won't be any kindergarten curriculum materials because there's none on the list.

You have created a crisis beyond what anybody could have imagined. You have taken \$75 million worth of desperately needed textbook money and you've turned even that bonanza into a problem for teachers and for school boards. But you've created more than a short-term crisis. You are doing more than wastefully spending your \$75 million, because you've begun to close the door to Canadian-written textbooks. You've changed the rules so that books no longer have to be written in Canada.

You told our leader Dalton McGuinty that there were no American publishers on the list. In fact, the majority of the approved books come from American-owned publishing companies and at least one is exclusively written by American authors.

Minister, I ask you, will you act now to suspend your shortsighted policy? Will you abort your public relations move and give boards and teachers time to spend \$75 million wisely and responsibly on behalf of Ontario's students?

Hon David Johnson: We intend to proceed in a measured fashion, well planned, to have these books available to our young people in time for September when school starts.

The Canadian Publishers' Council has written a letter which says that the suggestion that foreign-owned publishers are supplying foreign texts to the Ontario school system on the Ontario call for curriculum resources is not only a blatant falsehood, it is also an affront to all Canadian authors, educators, editors, illustrators, designers, manufacturers.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): What date was that letter?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Check the date.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Come to order, please.

Hon David Johnson: The date was yesterday, in case the critic didn't know.

These books are long overdue. These are books that have been looked at by about 200 teachers. They have scrutinized these books carefully. They say these books are good for our children, these books are in line with our new curriculum, and I believe our children should have the opportunity to have them provided in September in their schools.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South): I want to raise another example of this government's bungling, this time with the Minister of Health. I want to ask you about the risky experiment you're doing with hospital funding, with

funding to long-term-care facilities, to home care. What you announced yesterday in Toronto is part of a pattern of not giving the public the whole story, in fact the essence of the story.

We have compiled your promises and we have put that into a report, a health chart for the various communities. We found out that your policy of firing nurses and taking away health services is not being compensated for with replacement services.

You should know that in Toronto already, as we stand today, this area has lost \$408 million. More has been cut from its hospitals than has been brought back in in replacement services.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question.

Mr Kennedy: Worse, when you take your grand plan, your historic announcement, they lose \$1.5 billion over the eight years of that.

Minister, are you going to stand by this discount health care, or will you stand up today and tell us you're going to protect —

The Speaker: Minister of Health.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): This government prefers to deal in facts. They don't like to deal with anything that may be rumours or anything else. So I will say that yesterday we were certainly very pleased and very proud to be able to announce funding for the Toronto hospitals here in the city of \$186.1 million. This complements the \$316 million that we had already made available for long-term-care services.

What is extremely important to understand and to recognize is that this government is spending more on health —

The Speaker: Answer, please.

Hon Mrs Witmer: — than at any time in the history of this province. We have actually increased health spending from \$17.4 billion to over —

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, that's exactly the kind of doubletalk that the people of Toronto have become used to, and now they're going to know what it means. You're trying to confuse capital dollars — on the one hand \$186 million, you say, for little additions. You're closing 11 hospitals. You're taking away buildings and equipment from the people here. When it comes to operating dollars, the dollars that care for patients, in Toronto you've taken away \$408 million. In Willowdale and all kinds of parts of this province, you've removed the services.

In the long-suffering city of Windsor, when it comes to health care promises from you, we hear from people there. We heard from Laura today on our health hotline. She says she has an older friend. She has to go to hospital every day to feed this man because the nurses are too hard-pressed. It's no wonder, because in Windsor you've taken away millions of dollars so far. It's going to take them until 2003 to break even on your government.

Minister, you referred to facts. The only suspect part of this is it's based on your announcements and your statements. Aren't you concerned about the impact on patients

when you take millions of dollars more out of communities than you put back in? Will you act to protect them?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As we well know, the amount of money that is being spent on services to people in this province, as I just stated before, is larger than ever before. However, we also need to recognize that health, not only in Ontario but throughout Canada, is changing. One of the realities is that at the present time there isn't a need for the number of beds in hospitals, because 70% of the surgery in this province at the present time is being done on the basis of day surgery.

As a government, we are reforming the health system in order to ensure that people in this province have the appropriate services that they need, whether that service be at home, whether that service be in the doctor's office, whether that service be in a long-term-care facility or whether it be in the hospital. The reality is, we are spending more money than ever before.

Mr Kennedy: You can chant your mantra all you want, but for the people of Hamilton, who lose \$194 million under your plan, that doesn't wash. Some \$290 million is lost in Windsor, and Kitchener-Waterloo has already lost \$32 million. You can't tell them you've put the money back, because you haven't done it.

You've got a policy of transferring funds out of here. Your timing is clearly off. If you look at the graphs that cover these various communities, you're taking the money out. It's taking six years, eight years, 10 years before you put the money back in.

We want to know, are you going to be a health minister to stand up in this House and protect patients? You saw the graphs yesterday in estimates committee; you were told about the data. Produce your own facts. Tell us how you're protecting patients, or admit you're taking money out of communities and using it for the tax cut, using it for other things. Minister, will you stand in the House today and admit that what you're doing is taking money out of Toronto, out of Windsor, out of Ottawa, out of London, out of Hamilton and away from patients?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I hope that whatever data have been collected contain some substantiated facts and are a little different than some of the fact sheets that have been distributed.

Let me say that we made an announcement, June 18, where we indicate that 21 more dialysis patients will receive treatment with the establishment of an independent health facility in Cornwall. I know the member has been asking, and I'm pleased to say today that this is just another example of our government using health money, increased health spending, in order that we can expand the dialysis services and bring them closer to the homes of people in the Cornwall community.

The Speaker: Answer.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I am very pleased to say that our government, since 1995, has invested more than \$73 million in dialysis services. All of that money, which may at one time have been in the hospital budget, now has gone —

The Speaker: Thank you.

1420

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Health. Yesterday, we exposed some of your false announcements with respect to funding for long-term care. Today, I want to ask you about some people that you're not even trying to help. I'm talking about children with multiple disabilities, children who suffer from neurological disorders, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida and hydrocephalus, among other disorders. These are children who must seek help over 300,000 times a year at children's treatment centres across Ontario.

The funding for the 19 children's treatment centres has been frozen by the Ministry of Health, while the need for those treatment services has increased by over 40% in some places in the province. Waiting lists are now up to a year long. These children need treatment now. They need physiotherapy and occupational therapy services. We know you can afford a \$5.5-billion income tax scheme for the most well-off in this province. Why can't you afford to help these children? Will you lift the freeze?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): I'm very pleased the leader referred to the fact that funding was frozen, because it was indeed the NDP in 1993 who froze the funding for these community treatment centres. I want you to know that our government recognizes the special needs of children in this province, of those who receive treatment in the rehabilitation centres through the community treatment centres. We have not reduced any funding to the community treatment team. These budgets are going to remain protected.

In fact, we put additional dollars into children's services. We are now spending \$10 million on Healthy Babies, Healthy Children. We are spending \$20 million on preschoolers who have speech and language difficulties, children between the ages of two and five. We are focusing and doing everything we can to focus on prevention of health problems and we are investing in children at an early age.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Supplementary?

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): There are parents in the gallery today who have children, some who are receiving services from those centres and some who are still waiting. I hope you'll remember that when you answer, because these other announcements you've just talked about don't help their children. They can't understand why after five years, three years of it under your government, the review still hasn't taken place.

They're here because they're upset, because they've been told the reason is that health, education and community and social services won't get into the same room and agree to the terms of reference. Talk about bureaucratic bungling. Let's move this forward.

One of the parents is here to tell you what happens when services aren't integrated. Her daughter, Grace,

can't speak. At Lansdowne centre, where she gets full treatment, she gets the help she needs. In school they won't give her a signing intervenor because she's not deaf or blind. But she can't speak. The whole school day she's isolated. She's not able to communicate with anyone. The only way this is going to get fixed is if there is a coordination of services. That will only take place if you do the review. Will you get into the same room? Will you take charge, take responsibility and commit to starting that review this summer?

Hon Mrs Witmer: The review is under way. I just want to again stress the fact that there has been no reduction in the funding. In fact, we have actually increased funding. If you take a look at the Durham community, for children's rehabilitation services we have increased it by \$615,000.

Ms Lankin: The minister misspeaks herself. The review has not started. The \$615,000 you announced with great fanfare last year and put into Grandview you pulled out six months later. They've just laid off all the physiotherapists they hired under that money.

Minister, there's a parent here from Grandview today who would like to speak to you. Her daughter, Ashley, lost her ability to walk at eight years of age. She has undergone treatment at Grandview. She has undergone treatment at Sick Kids Hospital. She is 12 years old now. Last weekend the whole community celebrated when she rode her bicycle for the first time in four years. She commenced that treatment at Grandview, and credits it for why her daughter is walking again today. But she doesn't know if next month she's going to have that intensive pool therapy because you've cut that money out.

Minister, three demands: Lift the freeze, give them an immediate infusion of money from that long-term-care funding you announced, not a penny of which you've given to them, and get this review started this summer and involve those parents.

Hon Mrs Witmer: As I've indicated, we recognize there are children in this province who have special needs, and we are certainly endeavouring to put money into the budget to ensure that these children do have the services they need. We will continue to work with these families, we will continue to work with all of the other families to ensure that these children have the services that are required to respond to their needs. As I say, this review is getting under way and we hope we will be able to complete it as quickly as possible.

TEXTBOOKS

MANUELS SCOLAIRES

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My next question is for the Minister of Education and Training. I want to take the minister back to May 4 of this year when he made an announcement about Education Week in Ontario. He said an Ontario education must prepare students for the future. "It must provide them with the skills

and knowledge" — and confidence — "they will need to succeed" in the new millennium. That's what he said then.

Now we find that you are the minister who is giving away job opportunities in Ontario. Earlier this year you gave a contract for secondary school curriculum development to an American company, for the first time ever in the history of this province. Now we find out that your process for selecting elementary textbooks has widened the door even further for American companies. Now books only have to be written by Canadians or printed in Canada, not both.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question.

Mr Hampton: In other words, you're prepared to give away the jobs of editors, typesetters, printers, bookbinders and textbook writers. Minister, why are you so willing to give away the hope, the opportunity —

The Speaker: Minister?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): Of course, that's complete nonsense. All of the publishers who are involved in providing textbooks for this call for resources, each and every one of them are on circular 14, the same circular 14 that was in existence when the NDP was in power. These are exactly the same publishers that provided textbooks all across Ontario during the term of the leader of the third party. If he has such great opposition to these very same publishers today, why didn't he have that same objection to circular 14 under his jurisdiction when the NDP was in power?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): He asks the questions.

Hon David Johnson: Well, I'd like to hear him answer that.

The point is to get the best product in the hands of our students. There has been an inadequate supply of textbooks to our students for many years. This government is intent on addressing that situation.

The Speaker: Supplementary.

1430

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): The minister is pushing forward with his \$100-million taxpayers' expenditure for books and other materials when he hasn't yet received the completed curriculum. The teams working on the secondary school curriculum begin in September 1999. We've only just completed the elementary curriculum and we're still waiting for the arts, social sciences and physical education curricula. What will the minister do when he has his photo opportunities for his backbench colleagues next September, when the teachers and parents tell him that the textbooks don't match the new Ontario Curriculum when it's completed? What's the purpose of buying the textbooks in advance of completing the curriculum?

Hon David Johnson: The member opposite may have forgotten that the mathematics curriculum was introduced in September last year, the language in the province of Ontario was introduced last year. The review of these books was conducted through the Ontario Curriculum Clearinghouse by about 100 teachers in the province. Those 100 teachers have ensured that these books are in compliance with the new curriculum in mathematics and

language. On the French side, in the Centre de leadership another 100 teachers are involved.

You're taking a slam at teachers. This is what you're doing. You're saying that teachers are not able to determine what is compatible with the curriculum in Ontario. The teachers have looked at these books and they've said, "We have here about 160 books which match the curriculum and which will benefit our students and we want to go ahead with those."

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud): Au même ministre : monsieur le ministre, c'est intéressant que vous parlez des livres pour les jeunes francophones, parce que justement on a appris que votre liste des livres appropriés que vous avez annoncés avec toute la fanfare d'une annonce n'inclut pas les livres de mathématiques. Il n'y a pas de livres de mathématiques ou de sciences pour les septième et huitième années. Les élèves dans les programmes d'immersion n'ont pas de choix du tout de n'importe lequel des livres. Est-ce que c'est un oubli, cette affaire-là, je vous demande ?

Quand on demande si votre gouvernement va corriger cet oubli que vous avez fait, on s'est fait dire : «Pas de problème. Vous autres, les francophones, vous êtes capables d'acheter des livres avec votre argent, avec vos budgets scolaires, et non avec les 100 \$ millions que le gouvernement a mis en place.»

Monsieur le ministre, est-ce juste que les francophones n'ont pas le droit d'acheter les livres sur cette liste, qu'on a besoin de payer avec notre propre argent ?

Hon David Johnson: The member opposite actually does raise a good point in this particular case. This is the first good point I've heard in this whole discussion today.

In general I would say that the number of books and the selections are excellent. But on the French side, particularly in grades 5 to 8, there is a problem. I can assure you that we're not going to force any board to make a selection that's inappropriate. We are working with the French board and undoubtedly there will be special provisions to recognize, in those grades, the inadequacy. My guess is that we will probably diminish the proportion that the French board is allowed to purchase in the first phase and increase the proportion in the second phase so that no student will lose out and to ensure that they have the best possible product.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South): My question is to the Minister of Health. You're apparently not able to respond to the things you're doing to various communities. Maybe you'll respond to some of the people you're affecting. Today we have here from Collingwood Murray Doupe, Denise Doupe, Pamela Bélanger, who's an RN at the local hospital, Shirley Geddes, who's an RPN. They're here on behalf of 9,426 people in Collingwood who have signed petitions saying they don't accept your reckless cuts to their hospital and their secondary health care.

Minister, you cut their hospital by \$830,000 last year, by 7%, on a reckless basis. Here's what we heard from another registered nurse. She's caring for six to eight patients in the emergency department. She says: "The noise, the lack of

privacy make it an unpleasant experience for all who are ill and their families. It is disturbing to watch a dying patient and their family in sorrow in such a public environment."

You are subjecting Ontario, and Collingwood, to a reckless experiment. Will you undertake to review the funding to the hospital in Collingwood, and will you do that here today for the people of Collingwood?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): First of all, I think it's necessary that we put it into perspective and note that Collingwood General and Marine Hospital is currently undergoing a redevelopment/construction project of \$18 million, for which this government has provided \$11 million for the hospital's three years.

Following completion of the first two years of this project, the hospital has now submitted a balanced budget for 1998. We're very pleased that as a result of this reconstruction we're going to have a modern facility that will enable the health care providers and patients in that community to have access to services such as a new ICU, labour/delivery unit, ambulatory care clinic and patient unit.

Our ministry is continuing to work with that hospital to review their operating plans and the changes in order that we can ensure the highest-quality patient care for the people of Collingwood and the surrounding community.

Mr Kennedy: It's a shame that people had to come all the way from Collingwood to hear such a poor answer, because what they know is this: They know that your predecessor across the aisle approved that expansion of the hospital and right now, even as we speak, they're building 74 beds there. Do you know the problem with that? You're only funding 40. Right now there are 34 beds being built that there are no nurses for, that the patients can't use. That's Mike Harris's health plan in Ontario, and apparently it's Elizabeth Witmer's too.

Minister, I want to give you another opportunity. Because you're only funding these 40 beds, they tell us —

Interjection.

Mr Kennedy: You need to get up to date, Minister. They're going to have a \$200,000 deficit because of the salary increases this year, because you're not responsive to hospitals all across the province.

You heard what the nurse in emergency said. You could hear more afterwards if you like. They are here to talk to you. Will you sit down and talk to the people from Collingwood? Will you review the situation that sends people into substandard, discount health care that you're providing? Will you review that for Collingwood and will you make an undertaking to us today so 34 beds don't have to be empty when they're not even built yet?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I would be pleased to meet with these nurses or any other nurses, as I have said on many occasions. I have now met with nurses over 10 times in this province, and we certainly appreciate when they do bring to our attention some of the concerns and issues that they have as they serve people on the front lines throughout this province. We certainly value the role that nurses play in this province.

But I also know that there is a survey being done in the community at this time, and if there are recommendations that indicate there is a need for additional beds once the community survey has been completed, then obviously we will sit down again with the hospital and we will make sure that we have the appropriate space for people.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): I have a question for the Deputy Premier. Today your government is cutting off debate on your latest anti-worker legislation, Bill 31, which strikes very hard at the construction industry. It's another example of how little your government is prepared to listen to people. Since you have changed the rules of this Legislature, you can ram this anti-worker piece of legislation through the House in three or four days without a single minute for public hearings and no time for public scrutiny.

Your Minister of Labour yesterday told us that the building trades supported this legislation, but it's pretty clear now they don't, because today workers at two Sarnia building projects have left the job to set up informational pickets to tell people how wrong you are. That's just the beginning. Your anti-democratic attitude and your heavy-handed tactics here are going to destabilize the whole construction industry.

The Sarnia workers want public hearings. We want public hearings. What is so bad about this legislation that you can't let people look at it?

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): This bill, if passed, will ensure that the province will be better positioned to attract economically significant construction jobs to this province.

I would like to remind the leader of the third party that in 1997, 92% of all construction jobs created in Canada were created right here in the province of Ontario. What does he have against people having a job?

1440

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Minister, if that's the case, why are you ramming through all these massive changes? The fact of the matter is that this is just one more example of the undemocratic track record your government has. Let's not forget the omnibus bully-bill 26, where opposition parliamentarians were forced to hijack this Legislature in order to get some decent public hearings; Bill 7, where OPSEU workers were forced to go out on strike, that led to blood being spilled just outside this building; Bill 160, your attack on the education system, where you forced 120,000 teachers to take direct action; and now Bill 31, a bill you said it was okay to ram through because you had the unions on side. Well, you don't have the unions on side. You've got no hearings, no amendments, no support.

Minister, how can you justify continuing to ram through a bill that's definitely going to cause chaos across Ontario in the construction industry?

Hon Mr Eves: That was quite a speech. Non-construction employers are presently bound by province-

wide agreements over which they have virtually no control. Bill 31, if passed, will free those employers from the situation they are caught in that's beyond their control and will make them competitive in the marketplace. Coming from a government that lost 10,000 jobs, I know they find it very difficult to support a government that has created 371,000 jobs, and we will meet our target of 725,000.

COMPENSATION FOR HEPATITIS C PATIENTS

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): My question is for the Minister of Health. You were recently asked a question in the Legislature about the use of interferon as a treatment for victims of hepatitis C. I've been reading in media reports that the Ministry of Health takes six months in excessive red tape to approve treatment for individuals with hepatitis C for whom interferon would be effective. Could you please advise us of the process that is used to decide whether or not interferon would be effective for a victim of hepatitis C?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): Yes, the Ministry of Health follows the professional guidelines that are established by the Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver, hepatitis consensus group. As we all know, this is a group of leading hepatologists in Canada.

Their expert medical opinion is that to determine whether interferon would be an effective treatment for chronic hepatitis C, enzyme levels in patients must be tested for four to six months in order to ensure that the levels are high enough for the drug to be effective. It is not red tape that holds up the use of interferon; it is a clinical test that is used and that is recommended by the hepatitis consensus group.

Once the treatment of interferon has been recommended, it only takes the Ministry of Health about three weeks to process the applications. This of course applies to anybody using the Trillium drug plan or the Ontario drug benefit plan. So it's much less than six months.

Mr Carroll: Thanks, Minister, for setting the record straight. We've had a lot of conversation lately in the province about the federal government dragging its feet on full compensation for victims of hepatitis C. I know there are ongoing discussions happening between the Minister of Health and the federal government. Could you please give us an update today as to the status of the federal government and fair treatment for victims of hepatitis C?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Yes. As you know, the province of Ontario supports the agreement that was reached. However, we also support the need to provide financial assistance to those individuals who contracted hepatitis C prior to 1986. Yesterday there was a conversation with health ministers across Canada. It is certainly becoming apparent that health ministers across Canada recognize the need to act with compassion. They are supporting the Ontario position. The only position we are not aware of at the present time is the federal government's position. They have not indicated whether they are prepared to show similar compassion.

Hon David Turnbull (Minister without Portfolio): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent for the member for York South to ask a supplementary question on the hepatitis C issue.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Agreed? Agreed.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South): Minister, I wonder if you can tell us why it is that for hepatitis C victims in this province, where you reversed your stand, where you told us first of all that you stood by the deal — you told us that the day before the Premier changed. But right now there are hepatitis C victims in this province who can't get treatment. Right now you haven't done a look-back program; you haven't looked into how many hepatitis C victims we've got. Other provinces have done that, Minister. Why haven't you, and will do that and will you put before this House a package of the services and what you've done to make them available, to make provincial responsibility work so it can somehow be consistent with the position you think you're taking right now?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I'm very pleased that the health critic of the opposition party asked the question, because we support the package of assistance that was agreed to by all the provincial ministers.

We did listen to people in this province, and in response to what we heard, it was obvious that people wanted us to take another look; they wanted us to look at this issue based on compassion and caring. We have indicated that we are prepared to provide additional financial assistance to people who were infected prior to 1986. I'm very pleased to say today that it appears the other health ministers and the other provinces are prepared to do similar. They recognize the need for compassion.

I'm also pleased to say that today we met with the hepatitis C group and we met with the haemophiliac group and they are very supportive of the direction this province is taking.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. A crucial issue for the whole greater Toronto area is your decision on the Greater Toronto Services Board. I think it's fair to say that every municipality is anxiously awaiting it. I think it's fair to say a lot of energy is being expended on it.

I know that in 1996 you appointed Libby Burnham to head up a task force, and we expected something then. Then in 1997, you appointed Milt Farrow with a task force, and we expected something there. Then you appointed Alan Tonks, who has reported.

My question is this. Will you tell the Legislature and the public of Ontario, are you intending to introduce your legislation to establish a Greater Toronto Services Board before we adjourn for a two- to three-month break at the end of next week?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I think we all agree that the Greater Toronto Services Board is something that's extremely important

and necessary for the greater Toronto area. We had Libby Burnham go out and do an in-depth study of the GTA, come back with a report and recommendations. We had those recommendations followed up by Milt Farrow, who came back with his report. We took both those reports and developed draft legislation. We took the extra step of taking that draft legislation and putting it out across the entire GTA so every municipality and every stakeholder would have the opportunity of reviewing that information in depth.

Alan Tonks has done an excellent job of building consensus and getting input from the regional people, the lower-tier municipalities, to make sure we've got legislation that will provide the best coordinating services for the entire GTA.

I believe that the Greater Toronto Services Board is important and we're going to act on it as quickly as we possibly can.

1450

Mr Phillips: Next Thursday, I gather, the House will break for God knows how long, because we were off from the middle of December till the end of April. On something this important, I think we need some assurance from the minister that you are planning to act on it. I think it's fair to say that our municipalities across the greater Toronto area are absolutely anxious that you get on with it.

It's a very simple question, Minister: Can you assure the House that you will introduce the legislation next week so that the public, the municipalities and the opposition can understand where in the world you're heading with this?

Hon Mr Leach: I'm very pleased that the opposition parties agree that the Greater Toronto Services Board is extremely important to ensure that the coordination of services is conducted in a very efficient manner across the GTA. We recognize that it's important, and that's why we've taken the time to make sure that every stakeholder in the GTA has had ample opportunity to have input into that process. Every municipality, all the businesses, the development agencies have all had opportunities to make sure that the legislation we bring forward will serve the people of the greater Toronto area to the very best.

We have one week to go in the House. The member of the opposition only has another three or four days to wait, to see whether that legislation comes in next week. I understand that the House leaders have indicated that it probably will. I have great faith in my House leader to get in the legislation that's necessary.

AIRCRAFT PLANT CLOSURE

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. Virtually every country in the world wants a piece of the aircraft manufacturing industry. Virtually every country in the world understands that the manufacture of civilian and commercial aircraft carries with it tens of thousands of high-tech, high-productivity spinoff

jobs. So the workers at McDonnell Douglas were concerned, to say the least, when they read in the newspaper that your government is not prepared to invest to help reposition that very productive factory and help reposition the at least 2,000 direct, highly productive, high-technology jobs that exist there.

Minister, the people at McDonnell Douglas want your government to make a commitment. They want your government to make a commitment that you will invest to ensure that that factory is repositioned and that vital part of the aircraft manufacturing industry stays in Ontario, along with the thousands of jobs.

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism): The honourable member knows exactly that this government is very committed to job creation. The honourable member has hit on something that's very important. We do have a very qualified workforce in the aerospace sector. I've said that in this House and I've also said it everywhere I've been in promoting the aerospace sector in Ontario.

It speaks very well for that sector because of what the honourable member said earlier. Canada, the province of Ontario, generates a lot of jobs in the aerospace sector even though it does not have that much military equipment. When you take a look at how the aerospace industry works, I believe that builders of the aerospace industry want to invest in areas where they know they're going to get some business, but they're still investing in Ontario because of the quality of the workforce and also because of the positive economic environment that Ontario finally has.

Mr Hampton: Minister, you don't seem to get the picture. This is an industry of the future. This is an industry that carries with it tens of thousands of good-paying, highly productive spinoff jobs. I want to give you an example.

Your Premier was very pleased to go stand in front of the de Havilland factory in Downsview and say that this is a wonderful success story, but need I remind you that five short years ago there were only 1,500 people working at the de Havilland factory. I was there earlier today and there are now over 5,000, and they are producing four different aircraft and components for another aircraft. It's been a huge success story. Why? Because the Rae government, the NDP government, was willing to invest in those jobs, willing to invest in that industry.

I've also been to the McDonnell Douglas factory, and you ought to go, because the workers there want to know, are you prepared to invest in them? Are you prepared to invest to make sure that this vital industry of the future stays here in Ontario, grows here in Ontario and provides more jobs in Ontario?

Hon Mr Palladini: The honourable member is echoing the same words that I've been echoing for the past three years and that this government has been echoing for the past three years, and these are the same words that we echoed during the campaign of the Common Sense Revolution to bring prosperity back in Ontario. So I want to

commend the honourable member for reminding Ontarians of what this government is doing.

We've been saying all along that we want to protect those jobs. I am ready to go to Seattle to see what can be done. I have met with Minister Manley, the Minister of Industry for Canada, and he is on side, because we want to do whatever it takes to make sure that we don't lose one job. Whatever we have to do, we will make that effort in doing it. But most important, we are doing it. We are creating a very positive economic environment so that businesses are going to look at Ontario as an investment opportunity.

MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION

Mr Frank Sheehan (Lincoln): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The current Municipal Act is outdated, overly prescriptive and it causes a lot of confusion. It's difficult to understand. In February you released for consultation draft legislation for a proposed new Municipal Act. The lengthy consultation period was over on May 8. Can you report to the House what's happening?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I would like to thank the member for Lincoln for that question. As I think the members realize, the Municipal Act was written about 150 years ago and is severely out of date. It's a very cumbersome document that actually is very restrictive to municipalities. It gives them very little autonomy. They have to come to the Legislature for almost every little change that is needed. Little issues like dealing with barbed-wire fences, for example, require legislation to change, and we think the municipalities should have the autonomy to make decisions like that themselves.

Again, we've done a great deal of consultation. We've received 250 submissions from various stakeholders across the province as to how the Municipal Act should be revised. It's not surprising that the municipal governments want more autonomy than we're proposing to give —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer.

Hon Mr Leach: — while the other business stakeholders feel that we've gone too far.

We want to take those 250 submissions and analyse them completely —

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Mr Sheehan: Clearly there appear to be a variety of concerns to municipalities, the general public and the business sector in general. There seems to be a consensus that this act must be rewritten and yet the stakeholders seem to think there might be a need for some further consultation. Is that possible and do you plan to have it?

Hon Mr Leach: Again I thank the member for Lincoln for that question. As I mentioned, we received 250 different submissions from municipalities and various stakeholders across the province such as the Urban Development Institute and the law society, all giving extremely good input into the legislation.

But there isn't any doubt about it that the Municipal Act is complex. The municipalities want more autonomy. The business sector and the development industry would like to see more restrictions on the municipalities. We're going to work to find that compromise, that consensus between the various stakeholders, and for that reason we will redraft the legislation, put it out for further consultation over the summer and bring it back to this House in the fall.

1500

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My question is to the Minister of Health. In Graham Scott's report to your ministry regarding the realigned cancer care direction for Ontario, he stated that more financial resources must be directed in several areas, prevention and supportive care being two of them.

We have seen mountains of papers outlining what you plan to do but the people of Ontario have yet to see any real dollars directed in the area of supportive care services. When are you going to not only talk the talk but also walk the walk and listen to what Dr Margaret Fitch, who is coordinator of supportive care services, said: "Supportive care looks after patients' physical, informational, emotional, psychological, social and spiritual needs and can be just as important as treatment"?

Minister, my question is very simple: What do I tell Cancer Care Ontario's annual meeting in Sudbury tomorrow about your commitment to supportive services? How many dollars are you going to commit today towards supportive care services?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): Our government has been looking at reforming health care in order that we can provide the appropriate level of care, and certainly supportive services are very necessary. That's why we are reforming the health system. If people have needs, whether they're primary care needs, hospital needs, long-term-care needs or community service needs, we are ensuring that the money is being provided and we are putting every dollar into patient and people care.

Mr Bartolucci: That's hardly walking the walk. They want a commitment not of words but of dollars — a real commitment.

Prevention is also a major concern for everyone involved in cancer care. Cancer Care Ontario's interim report card stated that you have to direct far more fiscal/financial resources towards prevention.

Industrial causes of cancer are a major concern for everyone but in particular for people living in areas such as Windsor, Sault Ste Marie, Sarnia, Sudbury and Hamilton. These people want to know what you're going to do with regard to the report in Cancer Care Ontario's interim report card that stated that 9% of all workers die as a direct result of cancer. In other words, Minister, they want to know, when are you going to appoint a panel to look at the industrial factors which influence cancer in the workplace?

Hon Mrs Witmer: We certainly share the concerns of the member. We also share the concerns of the people in those communities which have been impacted. As you know, priority issues are extremely important for our government, and certainly the issue of cancer — the prevention of cancer, the treatment of cancer — is very important. In fact, that's why our government set up Cancer Care Ontario, in order that we could ensure that as a result of the work that was being done across this province, Cancer Care Ontario would be able to make recommendations to the government that would ensure that people, no matter where they lived, would have equal access to preventive programs and treatment. The recent information that we have received from Cancer Care Ontario is now being reviewed with them and we will be providing the appropriate resources.

IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): To the Deputy Premier: Yesterday Ottawa finally acknowledged the claim of the Kettle and Stony Point people to the land that was formerly Camp Ipperwash. That land was seized, as you know, some 50 years ago by the federal government. The acknowledgement doesn't include the property, the land that is currently Ipperwash Provincial Park.

The government has known for years, and your government has been in possession of documents, specifically the 1937 letter, for the last three years, indicating that there's a burial ground in existence on what is now Ipperwash Provincial Park.

In view of the validation of the claims by the Kettle and Stony Point peoples, by virtue of the federal government's acknowledgement of their claims to Camp Ipperwash, will this government now commit to respecting the sacred ground of first nations people and return to them their land at Ipperwash Provincial Park?

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Attorney General? I apologize, I thought you said the Attorney General. Did you say Deputy Premier?

Mr Kormos: No. You read Mr Eves's mind, though.

The Speaker: Deputy Premier. My fault.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): Mr Speaker, I would like to refer this question to the minister responsible for native affairs.

The Speaker: I've got to tell you that it was my fault, so there will be a supplementary, because there wasn't enough time left. Attorney General.

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): To date, no land claim has been submitted to Ontario with respect to the lands encompassed by Ipperwash Provincial Park, but as I have said in this Legislature before, certainly if there is a burial ground at Ipperwash Provincial Park, the government will do whatever it has to do to ensure that burial ground is respected and protected.

Mr Kormos: The fact that those people were occupying that park in 1995 addresses very much their claim over land that includes, among other things, a historical burying

ground. That's why they were there. Rather than looking into it and rather than utilizing the normal protocol and procedure that has been adopted by the OPP historically, this government took a very different tack.

You know, Attorney General, that on the night of September 6, 1995, the OPP suddenly changed their long-time policy, their long-time protocol. That protocol went out the window, and they moved into the park and shot Dudley George.

There were meetings on September 5 and 6 with the Premier's aide, Deb Hutton, where remarks were made to the effect of, "Get the Indians out of the park." That was a major shift in policy. This government played a very distinctive role.

We have asked you time after time to clear the air and call a public inquiry. For two years you have stalled, delayed and postponed. What exactly is it that the government is hiding? Will you acknowledge the claims of the Kettle and Stoney Point people and will you call an inquiry into this matter?

Hon Mr Harnick: As I have indicated before, there are a number of lawsuits, be they civil or criminal, that continue. It would be inappropriate to deal with the issue of any kind of inquiry.

Let me say further that our government has been clear and consistent on this issue. We will not discuss issues pertaining to Ipperwash Provincial Park until the occupation has ended. Certainly once the occupation has ended, we can talk about the issue of the burial ground. We can talk about the issue of a land claim if a land claim is indeed ultimately submitted. Those are all things that the province is prepared to do.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to revert to introduction of bills.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CITY OF TORONTO AMENDMENT ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

Ms Lankin moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 44, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 44, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la cité de Toronto.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): That brings back memories. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): My fourth bill. I dare not say much, Mr Speaker, only to assure the minister that these bills are not cumulative.

VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIME WEEK ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998

SUR LA SEMAINE DES VICTIMES DE CRIMES DE VIOLENCE

Mr Baird moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 45, An Act proclaiming Victims of Violent Crime Week / Projet de loi 45, Loi proclamant la Semaine des victimes de crimes de violence.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

PETITIONS

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South): It's with great pleasure that I rise in the Legislature today to read a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the government of Ontario has cut the budget of Collingwood Marine and General Hospital by an unreasonable amount given our growth in population and high percentage of seniors;

"Whereas this has led the board of the hospital to contemplate cutting beds below the level needed to serve the community, while the nearest alternative service is at least 45 minutes away; and

"Whereas such cuts may also lead to the loss of qualified doctors and other health services; and

"Whereas Jim Wilson, MPP, has chosen not to represent our community's need for good health care, in contradiction to his statement and commitment made in 1994;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, request the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to restore the reckless cut to the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital and to adopt a real rural health policy that will protect communities such as ours from such threats in the future."

It is indeed my pleasure to present, on behalf of 9,426 citizens of Collingwood, this petition, to which I add my signature. My thanks to its organizer, Mr Murray Doupe.

1510

COMPENSATION FOR HEPATITIS C PATIENTS

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas many Ontarians have been infected with the hepatitis C virus as a result of transfusions using contaminated blood; and

"Whereas the current compensation package only provides funding for those people infected between the years 1986 and 1990; and

"Whereas in Canada there are at least 20,000 surviving victims who were infected with hepatitis C before 1986,

who placed their faith in the blood system and are now suffering;

"Now therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislature of Ontario on behalf of the victims and their families in support of the Ontario government's call for a compensation package for Ontarians who are infected with the hepatitis C virus through the blood system prior to 1986, and that pending a resolution of the federal liability for the contaminated blood problem, Ontario agree in the interim that such new package be funded by the Ontario and the federal government on the same basis as the federal-provincial agreement covering 1986-90.

"We call on the government of Canada to do the right thing."

I affix my signature.

ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): I have a petition signed by several people in my riding.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass legislation under the Environmental Protection Act requiring that all gasoline offered for sale to motor vehicles in the province should contain a minimum oxygen content by weight as a result of a blended fuel mixture, which may include ethanol."

I proudly affix my signature.

HEALTH CARE

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which I'd like to read. It's says, "Say no to the privatization of health care."

"Whereas we are concerned about the quality of health care in Ontario;

"Whereas we do not believe health care should be for sale;

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is taking steps to allow profit-driven companies to provide health care services in Ontario;

"Whereas we won't stand for profits over people;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Do not privatize our health care services."

I concur with the petitioners and I will affix my signature to it.

BOTTLE RECYCLING

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph): I am delighted to present a petition this afternoon from 94 students at Shelldale Crescent Public School. They indicate to us that refillable PET bottles can be reused more than 25 times, that they can be recycled and that they use less resources and cause less pollution. I am pleased to offer this petition on their behalf. They request that the Legislature indicate that

plastic pop bottles should be reused and that a deposit-return system should be enforced in Ontario.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition which reads as follows:

"To the government of Ontario:

"Whereas the Conservative government of Mike Harris is trying to increase the limit on the amount of money that corporations and individuals are allowed to contribute to political parties and individual candidates in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Harris government plans to introduce legislation to permit political parties and candidates to spend far more money during election campaigns; and

"Whereas the Conservative government of Mike Harris would like to remove certain campaign expenditures such as polling and campaign headquarters equipment from the spending limits placed on political parties and candidates; and

"Whereas the Conservative government is proposing to abolish the Ontario election finances commission, the watchdog agency policing political contributions and expenditures; and

"Whereas the Harris government wishes to shorten the length of provincial election campaigns and to permit expensive media advertising throughout the entire campaign period, thereby favouring the political parties and candidates with the most money; and

"Whereas the changes to the Election Finances Act proposed by Mike Harris will give undue and unacceptable influence to the wealthiest and most powerful interests in our province and will result in the problems that have plagued the American political system, where money plays a central role;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to abandon his planned legislation, which will permit substantial increases in the amount of money that can be contributed by corporations and individuals to political parties and candidates and the amount of money that political parties and candidates can spend in provincial elections."

I affix my signature because I am in full agreement.

HEALTH CARE

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): For the benefit of the House, I attended the annual general meeting of the Memorial Hospital in Bowmanville. It was their last general meeting because they are forming the East Durham Hospital Corp. I met with members Victoria Girling, Anna Strike and Patti Stephenson. They are very concerned about health care, and I have a petition here to present from some of my constituents.

"To Premier Harris, Minister of Health Elizabeth Witmer and members of the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has recently strengthened its position as the number one ministry, obvious by its \$1.7-billion three-year agreement with the Ontario

Medical Association, and by increasing health care spending from \$17.4 billion to some \$18.5 billion;

"Furthermore, its \$1.2-billion long-term care funding and its recently announced \$186-million capital for hospitals in Toronto; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is committed to fair, equitable funding for all Ontarians; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has met with the GTA/905 Health Care Alliance and recognizes that the GTA, especially Durham, is underfunded, less than the provincial average;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately commit to the growth funding to the GTA and Durham and to make this funding announcement as soon as possible."

I am pleased to sign my name to this petition for Durham East. Mr Klees for York-Mackenzie, Julia Munro for Durham-York all sign —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I have another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas nurses in Ontario often experience coercion to participate in practices which directly contravene their deeply held ethical standards; and

"Whereas pharmacists in Ontario are often pressured to dispense and/or sell chemicals and/or devices contrary to their moral or religious beliefs; and

"Whereas public health workers in Ontario are expected to assist in providing controversial services and promoting controversial materials against their consciences; and

"Whereas physicians in Ontario often experience pressure to give referrals for medications, treatments and/or procedures which they believe to be gravely immoral; and

"Whereas competent health care workers and students in various health care disciplines in Ontario have been denied training, employment, continued employment and advancement in their intended fields and suffered other forms of unjust discrimination because of the dictates of their consciences; and

"Whereas the health care workers experiencing such unjust discrimination have at present no practical and accessible legal means to protect themselves;

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

I will affix my signature to it.

Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington): I have a petition presented to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. In summary, it says:

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

It is signed by a significant number of my constituents and I will affix my signature to it as well.

1520

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario similar to one previously given but signed by a significant number of other people.

"Whereas the Conservative government of Mike Harris is trying to increase the limit on the amount of money that corporations and individuals are allowed to contribute to political parties and individual candidates in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Harris government plans to introduce legislation to permit political parties and candidates to spend far more money during election campaigns; and

"Whereas the Conservative government of Mike Harris would like to remove certain campaign expenses such as polling and campaign headquarters equipment from the spending limits placed on political parties and candidates; and

"Whereas the Conservative government is proposing to abolish the Ontario election finances commission, the watchdog agency policing political contributions and expenditures; and

"Whereas the Harris government wishes to shorten the length of provincial election campaigns and to permit expensive media advertising throughout the entire campaign period, thereby favouring the political parties and candidates with the most money; and

"Whereas the changes to the Election Finances Act proposed by Mike Harris will give undue and unacceptable influence to the wealthiest and most powerful interests in our province and will result in the problems that have plagued the American political system, where money plays a central role;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to abandon this planned legislation, which will permit substantial increases in the amount of money that can be contributed by corporations and individuals to political parties and candidates and the amount of money that political parties and candidates can spend in provincial elections."

In full support of this, I add my signature.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Madam Speaker, pursuant to your directions in the past and the rulings of Speaker Morin, I won't take the time of this

assembly to read the whole petition. Instead, I'll paraphrase according to standing order 38(b).

It's a petition signed by a number of constituents in my riding and outside who are concerned about the need to enact legislation that will recognize the freedom of conscience of health care workers.

I'm pleased to sign this petition to make it an official record of the Legislature.

RENT REGULATION

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario on rent control.

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has brought forth Bill 96, legislation which will effectively kill rent control in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris campaign literature during the York South by-election stated, 'Rent control will continue'; and

"Whereas tenant groups, students and seniors have pointed out that this legislation will hurt those who can least afford it, as it will cause higher rents across most markets in Ontario; and

"Whereas this Mike Harris proposal will make it easier for residents to be evicted from retirement care homes; and

"Whereas the opposition continues to believe that all tenants, and particularly the vulnerable in our society who live on fixed incomes, deserve the assurance of a maximum rent cap;

"We, the undersigned, demand that the Mike Harris government scrap its proposal to abandon and eliminate rent control and introduce legislation which will protect tenants in the province of Ontario."

I affix my signature, as I'm in full agreement.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there is an urgent need to amend the Young Offenders Act; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario continues to show inordinate levels of youth crime in the province with unsatisfactory outcomes; and

"Whereas it is clear that the Young Offenders Act does not go far enough in dealing effectively with the most serious and violent young offenders, particularly repeat offenders; and

"Whereas the time has come to take measures to ensure that these offenders are held accountable for their actions;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the province of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario pursue with the government of Canada to:

"(1) redefine young offender so that youths 16 and older are prosecuted as adults under the Criminal Code;

"(2) provide for the prosecution of youths under the age of 12 for serious or violent offences;

"(3) require youths transferred to adult court to have the same parole eligibility requirements as adult offenders;

"(4) restrict access to free legal counsel to ensure parents meet provincial legal aid eligibility requirements;

"(5) permit the publication of the names of youths convicted of serious violent crimes;

"(6) apply the victim surcharge to young offenders; and

"(7) provide for mandatory custody dispositions for youths convicted of an offence involving the use of weapons."

I affix my signature with pride to this petition.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): Point of order, Madam Speaker: I'd like to ask unanimous consent to have one more go-around of petitions.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Is there unanimous consent? No.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): On a point of order, Madam Speaker: As has just been proved by my colleague from Nepean obviously having failed to have an opportunity to present a petition again, I'm going to ask you again to direct your attention to standing order 38(d). Throughout this afternoon's proceedings, as is quite frequently the case, members opposite presented a number of petitions by what can only be described as speechifying, taking positions against government policies, and in almost every case the petition was returned by the Clerk.

Standing order 38(d) says, "Every member presenting a petition shall ensure that the petition conforms with the standing orders." If this was the first month, particularly for the new members in this assembly, it would be understandable if people did not know the rules. But when the member for St Catharines day after day — and many others, but twice today the member for St Catharines — submitted petitions that were immediately rejected — he knows full well the standards that petitions must meet. I would ask for your direction on what the Clerk can do to notify you when members consistently abuse this standing order.

At the same time, pursuant to standing order 38(b), and I appreciate that you have counselled members in this chamber that there is a need to abbreviate their statements, I believe it is incumbent upon you to put some kind of specific standard. Perhaps, if I may be so bold, 30 seconds could be offered to anyone to read an abbreviation and outline the number of people who have signed.

I would ask you to rule on those two, and in particular to direct those members who are continually taking up time and denying those with legitimate petitions that there will be a penalty if they do this in the future.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): To the member for Scarborough East, you actually did raise this point of order with me when I was in the chair, and I believe with the Speaker and one of the other deputy Speakers. My ruling at that time is the same as today. The

standing orders say that you may summarize the petition or read the petition, but not both and that —

Mr Gilchrist: That's 38(b).

The Deputy Speaker: Do you want to listen to my ruling? Okay.

People have the opportunity to do one of those. That's what people have been doing.

Your other point, about the Clerk having some way to demonstrate to me that a petition may not be a valid one, there's no way within the existing rules that this can be done.

Your third point would mean a rule change. That is up to the Legislature. If you want to propose that there be a rule change, that there be a time limit on petitions, then so be it. You can do that, and then there can be a legislative change to the rules. That's my ruling.

Mr Gilchrist: Madam Speaker, I would ask you to clarify —

The Deputy Speaker: Just take your seat for one more moment.

I would remind members once again, as I did before when this point was raised, that there are a lot of members trying to get on for petitions. We have 15 minutes, and I would ask members to try to summarize their petitions. It's up to them to bear in mind that there are many people trying to get their petitions read within 15 minutes.

Mr Gilchrist: Madam Speaker, if I may ask your indulgence, you clarified that. I appreciate your position. Standing order 38(d), on the other hand, is not at all tenuous or nebulous in its demands. It says that "every member...shall ensure." Surely it flows from that that there is a consequence if a member does not ensure, particularly when it's a repeated abuse in this chamber.

This is not a case where a typographical error or something caused the rejection. There are no signatures or it's photocopied or there are erasures or insertions. These things are being rejected for obvious reasons that any member with more than a week's experience in this chamber would know make them invalid. There must be a consequence if people continually violate one of the standing orders. I would ask your explanation why the standing orders would not —

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Take your seat, please. There are many standing orders that have no sanctions. This is one of them. All I can do is say to the members that they should be aware of the standing order and adhere to it. It is not my responsibility to decide whether the petition is in order or not. That is determined by the Clerk. There are no penalties. Again, if you want to suggest that there should be a rule change and penalties attached, that's up to you. I have no power as the Chair to make that determination beforehand.

1530

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I hope that no member in this House rises to curtail our rights to represent the voice of our people. Often we do speak on behalf of our people here even when we read petitions submitted to us not in the proper form. But it is my duty, my responsibility, and I

believe it is the member's responsibility to read whatever we receive in this House as petitions under any form. For the member to rise —

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, member for Yorkview. I've already ruled on this, and I would again ask the members who may be abusing the rules as they exist to bear that in mind. But again I would say it is not my responsibility to make that determination before the clerks check the petitions. I do not have the responsibility to do that.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon David Turnbull (Minister without Portfolio): I move that pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 31, An Act to promote economic development and create jobs in the construction industry, to further workplace democracy and to make other amendments to labour and employment statutes, when Bill 31 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

That the order for third reading of the bill shall then immediately be called and that two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill;

That at the end of that time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment;

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceeding on the bill, the division bells shall be limited to five minutes; and

That there shall be no deferral of the vote pursuant to standing order 28(h).

I believe we have unanimous consent to equally divide the time between the three parties this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Is it agreed that the time will be divided among the three parties equally? Agreed.

Member for Niagara Falls.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): It's amazing how quickly we got unanimous consent. I thought we weren't going to get it for the rest of the session. But I understand that some of these things are arranged before we get here and I know the House leaders need to cooperate on several of these things. So I'm delighted that we've got unanimous consent to split the time equally among the three parties, and I'll be the first speaker for my party, to be followed by two others.

I just want to speak briefly on the principles of Bill 31, the Economic Development and Workplace Democracy Act. This legislation is about three things: It is about jobs,

it is about fairness, and it is about the basic democratic rights of employees.

The opposition says: "Stop. Wait." Well, this government believes that we should not wait, that it is wrong to wait and even worse to stop. We must not wait for jobs. We must not wait for fairness. We must not wait for basic democratic rights.

This legislation is about jobs, thousands of high-skilled, good-paying, unionized construction jobs and industrial jobs at the end of those construction projects. It's about thousands of high-skilled, good-paying industrial jobs, in fact. It's about thousands of spinoff jobs that build the communities that we live in.

This legislation is about fairness, the fairness that all construction companies in the province should have the right to bid on projects paid for by taxpayers' dollars. It's about fairness that treats construction companies as construction companies and those that are not construction companies as non-construction companies.

This legislation is about basic democratic rights: the right to a fair, secret ballot vote; the right that votes should count, always; the right that majority rules; and the right that some misconduct by a third party, union or management, should not take away that right to choose.

I'd like to speak about project agreements that are in this bill. This legislation is about building a future for this province, a future the Liberals would like to put on hold, a future the NDP would like to kill altogether. The future doesn't wait. The future is now. Ontario is losing out on jobs now.

While we have had a huge job creation success in the past three years because of the actions of this government, there are thousands more just waiting to go ahead.

One company, Bayer, after we brought forward this act, had this to say in indicating that it would indeed go forward with some more construction projects which will bring forward long-term industrial jobs to the province of Ontario:

"It is necessary for us to continuously improve our existing businesses in order to be competitive. We are counting on the provincial government to provide a leadership role in a pro-growth, pro-job environment. Today's announcement by the Minister of Labour regarding the labour legislation is welcome news for us. This removes the final impediment that would help us attract more international investments to this area."

This has been echoed by other petrochemical companies that want to invest in Ontario. In fact, the Canadian Chemical Producers Association had this to say:

"These amendments are good for Ontario as they will create a competitive and attractive environment for investment in the province. This, in effect, opens the door to a pool of potential new investment of some \$2.5 billion to \$5 billion.

"By our calculations, we're looking at the potential of creating 42,500 new jobs for Ontarians. We see this as good news for our industry and good news for Ontario workers. It's a situation in which everybody comes out ahead."

We couldn't agree more. We want those 42,000 jobs to happen as soon as possible and that's what today's motion is about.

This legislation would put in place a framework for negotiation, a framework that would allow unions and companies to come together and work out a specific deal for a specific project, the terms and conditions of which are their choosing and theirs alone.

If 60% of the unions approve that deal, then the project goes ahead. Right now, if one union disagrees with the deal, then it dies and the project is lost, the construction jobs are lost, the investment jobs are lost and the resulting long-term industrial jobs are lost.

Project agreements, as proposed in this legislation, build a framework so that projects, jobs and investment will not be lost because one group won't play. It builds a simple framework of majority rule.

Already there have been several myths that have cropped up about this bill. Let me just address a few of those.

The myth that project agreements take away a union's right to strike: The reality is that unions negotiate all the terms and conditions of any project agreement, including no-strike, no-lockout provisions.

The myth that project agreements force unions to cut wages: Project agreements can only be entered into with 60% of the union's approval and do not require any adjustment to wages.

Construction unions never agreed to project agreements: The reality is that construction unions and employers have agreed in principle on project agreements for almost a year.

Finally, the myth that there have been no meaningful discussions on the construction provisions of this bill: The reality is that discussions around making Ontario's construction industry competitive, including who should or should not be covered by provincial bargaining, have been ongoing for over a year.

1540

It appears that the opposition doesn't really care about the jobs that the project agreements could bring. The opposition doesn't seem to care about the investment that project agreements could bring. The opposition doesn't seem to care about the standard of living of the communities that would get this new investment, that would get these jobs, that would see these communities grow and prosper with new wealth and new opportunities.

The NDP forget about regular local union members and what they really want. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, they want jobs. When those construction jobs are over and those projects are complete and that investment is in place, they want another job, they want another project.

Project agreements, as proposed in this legislation, would give a better chance — a much better chance — at winning investment and bringing projects to Ontario and keeping construction workers working. That's what construction workers want. They want to work. They want to provide for their families. They want security for their

future. That's what they want and that's what this legislation will do.

I'd like to ask the opposition if regular union members — for instance, those from the Sarnia area — want jobs to secure their future. I'd like to ask them if good hardworking union people in this province want this government to work hard to help bring good unionized construction jobs to the province.

I'd say that the opposition is out of touch with hardworking people in Ontario and I'd say that some union bosses are out of touch with their local members if they think anything else.

I'd like the members to ask the construction worker without a job if he or she wants one. I'd like them to ask the spouse of that construction worker if he or she wants their spouse to have a job. I'd like them to ask their children too.

I know the members from Sarnia, Mr Boushy and Mr Beaubien, have asked the question to thousands of people in their communities and I know that the answer came back loud and clear to them: that they were anxious for those jobs, that they were anxious for this government to move on project agreements so that those jobs might become a reality.

The Liberals would like this government to sit back and rest on our laurels. We've got good laurels to rest on: 370,000 jobs in the past three years. They say that the construction sector is competitive enough, that we don't need to continue competing for major industrial projects and all those jobs and all the prosperity that goes with it. Why then have the trade unions and contractors been discussing construction competitiveness issues for over a year? Why then have all parties agreed something must be done?

I briefly said that there was some agreement from construction unions about project agreements and I know that the members opposite will stand up and read letters to me later on today that say that's not the case, letters — I have copies of the same — which came out after this legislation was introduced saying just that, that some of the building trades didn't agree with project agreements.

The signatories of this letter, though — many of the exact same people, definitely all of the exact same unions — back on July 18, 1997, in a final proposal to the Minister of Labour, agreed with project agreements for Ontario. So for them now to say that they don't agree with project agreements — never have — is a little difficult for us on this side of the House to abide by.

Some of the people who signed the agreement in July, who have signed the letter of the trades council recently, probably at the behest of one of the opposite parties, include the Ontario Provincial Conference of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers; the International Association of Bridge, Structural, and Ornamental Iron Workers and Rod Workers; Millwrights District Council; International Brotherhood of Boilermakers; Sprinklerfitters local; International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers; and it goes on and on.

So there has been a great deal of work on these agreements; there has been a great deal of consensus, as I mentioned, with this agreement back in July.

I know that politics plays a part, but we can't always let politics stay in the way of new jobs for Ontario citizens.

The Canadian Chemical Producers, as I have said, worry that we'll miss out on a potential \$5 billion in investment from the petrochemical sector alone if Ontario doesn't get its construction sector more competitive. That's a potential, they have told us, of 42,000 jobs.

This government is looking out at the future, because we can never plan for too many jobs and because planning for the future is what good government is all about. Members opposite may not understand this, given their record in government, but this government knows that if we don't plan for the future, we will lose out on jobs, we will lose out on investment, we will lose out on growth, and our standard of living will slide just like it did in the years from 1990 to 1995.

Remember those times, the despair that soaked through our communities, the fear of the future for ourselves and our children, the despair that plunged almost an entire generation of young people into hopelessness? I remember, from 1990 to 1995, the closures of plants in my own riding and don't ever want to see that come Ontario's way again. Why did it happen? It happened because there was no plan to make jobs the number one priority. There was no course set for a future of prosperity.

This legislation is part — only part — of the government's plan for the future, a plan that would keep the jobs coming to Ontario, that would keep new investment coming to Ontario. This legislation is part of the plan for a strong and prosperous Ontario, an Ontario built by a competitive construction industry.

It's important that this legislation move forward now. This legislation is about jobs, it's about fairness and it's about the basic democratic rights of employees. This legislation is about thousands of high-skilled, good-paying, unionized construction jobs, high-skilled, good-paying industrial jobs, and it's about thousands of spinoff jobs and prosperity for the communities of Ontario.

This legislation is about the fairness that all construction companies in the province should have the right to bid on projects paid for by taxpayers' dollars. It's about fairness that treats construction companies as construction companies, and those that are not construction companies will not be treated as construction companies. It is about basic democratic rights: the right to a fair secret ballot vote, the right that votes should always count, the right that majority rules and the right that misconduct by a third party, union or management, should not take away an employee's right to choose.

We must not wait for jobs. We must not wait for fairness. We must not wait to bring basic democratic rights to the workers of Ontario. The time to build a future is now.

Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie): I am pleased to join with my colleague in debate on the bill before us, an important bill indeed. I would like to start my remarks by

referring to an internationally published paper entitled "A Mid-term Review of the Harris Government." Specifically with regard to labour issues, the paper states the following:

"Both theory and evidence suggest that economies with less rigid labour markets produce more jobs and experience greater productivity gains than economies with more rigid labour markets. The Ontario government must be applauded for taking steps to reduce job-destroying labour market rigidities."

I thought that might be a good way to begin the discussion on this legislation before us. Much has been said to date in debate around this bill by members of the opposition about how this legislation supposedly is an attack on marketplace democracy, on workplace democracy. The member for Hamilton Centre waxes eloquent, particularly with galleries behind him on occasion, about how this will destroy jobs, about how this will interfere with workplace democracy. Quite to the contrary. In fact, we believe very strongly that this legislation takes one additional step forward towards entrenching workplace democracy here in Ontario, which in turn will lead to more jobs, and more confidence on the part of employers, on the part of those who are going to invest in this province, on the part of international investors as they consider the labour market here in Ontario and the environment in which businesses can invest for future job growth.

1550

Section 11 of the previous act, prior to amendment, "allowed trade unions to be certified in certain circumstances despite," and I'm reading from the preface to this bill, "the results of the representation vote. Section 11 also allowed applications for certification to be dismissed in certain circumstances despite the results of a representation vote."

I find it difficult — and we have people here with us today observing these proceedings and it must be confusing to them as well — to hear members of this Legislature refer to a bill that takes away the ability of the labour relations board to override the expressed will of individuals who participated in a vote regarding certification and construe that as being in the interests of democracy.

My understanding of the democratic process of the rights of individuals in our society to express themselves over an issue is, yes, we have a vote, and in order for that vote to truly be effective it should be a secret ballot vote. Then, when the votes are counted, the majority should rule. I believe that is how we in this province, in this country, understand the democratic process.

What we are proposing, if this legislation comes into effect, and we trust that it will, and perhaps even members opposite after they have a chance to seriously consider the facts of this legislation — unfortunately, we heard today from a member of one of the opposition parties, and I cannot imagine that this would have happened, but the member actually admitted that she'd voted on a bill and hadn't read it. She was changing her mind about this in her heart and had an opportunity to express that today.

I can't imagine that that would ever happen in this House. However, perhaps some members who have expressed their opposition to this particular piece of legislation have done so also because they really haven't read it. It's our hope that over the next number of hours members of the opposition parties would take the time and really read this legislation, read it in a spirit of contemplation and consider what is best for the people back home in their ridings; for, yes, the unions members, who will be depending on this legislation for jobs.

We have a report. This comes out of a paper that I'm sure you read daily, the *Toronto Sun*. This is Christina Blizzard's column, if I may quote her. I know you admire her as well. "The bottom line is this: Estimates are Flaherty's legislation" — which by the way can become all of our legislation if we come together and vote for this — "will save 42,500 jobs in the petrochemical industry alone."

What is in the best interests of the workers of Ontario? Is it that we create an artificial debate about this legislation and what may in its worst-case scenario take place? I don't think so. When we settle down and consider the true principles, as my colleague referenced them earlier in debate, we can all agree that it is in fact in the best interests of all workers in this province, unionized or non-unionized, that we pass this legislation, that we create an environment in the workplace that is truly democratic and that truly works in the interests of employers, workers and the economy overall.

What is the direction this bill will take us? It will ensure that when there is a vote it's clear, decisive in terms of its result, the vote of the majority of the people who have cast a vote; that if there is to be certification, it will be as a result of that vote. Likewise, if it is to the contrary, that too will be honoured.

There are members of this House who have an inherent distrust of employers. Apparently those individuals and those companies in this province who risk their capital, who go out of their way to create opportunities for employment, somehow they are the evil ones in this province. Are there occasions in this province where perhaps an employer has intimidated? Is that possible? It is possible. We're not living in a perfect world. Clearly, we have to ensure as well that there is protection for workers in those circumstances.

But contrary again to the contentions of members opposite who say that this legislation strips protection from workers in the event of that kind of intimidation, I point to subsection 11(5) of the proposed legislation, which I would like to read into the record. It states as follows: "Without restricting its powers under section 96, the board may do anything to ensure that a new representation vote ordered under this section reflects the true wishes of the employees in the bargaining unit."

The board retains the right that if for any reason whatsoever it determines that perhaps there has been an interference with the right of the workers or with that voting process, that vote can be ordered again and the

appropriate mechanism be put in place to determine the will of the workers under the circumstance.

It's important that we understand, that the workers in our province understand, what the true intent of this legislation is and what it is not; that there are some myths being perpetuated across the province. Quite frankly, if I was in the shoes of workers who did not have access directly to this legislation, I would not appreciate having that kind of misinformation perpetuated to me, because I rely on the leaders, whether or not they be union leaders, I rely on those to whom I'm paying my union dues to give me the goods about what the circumstances are that I'm facing. This is one opportunity we have in this House to set the record straight.

My colleague has already referenced some of those myths that have been discussed. Another one of those myths is that under this proposed legislation employees of non-construction employers can't be unionized. That's absolutely false. The fact of the matter is that no employees will be denied bargaining rights. These employers are subject to the same rules as all other employers outside the construction industry.

A second myth is that non-construction employer provisions are only in the bill to cater to big business. Lots of small employers and their associations — for example, the CFIB and the OGCA — have asked that non-construction employers such as retailers, schools and municipalities not be treated like big construction companies.

Another myth is that the repeal of the OLRB's automatic certification or non-certification power invites employer and union misconduct. I just read into the record the section of the act that clearly dispels that.

1600

Another myth is that the repeal of the OLRB's automatic certification or non-certification power is undemocratic. Guaranteeing that the results of a fair, secret ballot vote are respected is not undemocratic. In fact, as I've indicated before, it's at the basis of democracy.

Yes, there are those in this House who are probably going to argue again this afternoon that there are circumstances under which the democratic will should be overruled. Well, we're going to agree to disagree. We're going to agree, that is, those of us who respect democracy, that we must ensure that the will of the majority on these votes prevails and that kind of workplace democracy is continued.

Why do we do that? At the end of the day, philosophically, individuals may win and have their way, but let me point out that we have come through a number of years in this province where the kind of philosophical thought that's being put forward by the member for Hamilton Centre resulted in a tremendous outflow of jobs from this province; resulted in employers no longer willing to invest in this province because they were unsure of what the environment would be into which they were investing their dollars.

We're bringing this legislation forward because we believe that it will encourage job growth. It will encourage investment not only within the province but inter-

nationally. We believe that at the end of the day it will be in the best interests of unions —

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Oh, please.

Mr Klees: — because it will restore credibly to an organization that is there to serve their membership and to serve the best interests of their membership.

The member for Hamilton Centre expresses his obvious disagreement with that very statement. Let me suggest to you that every union member whom I have spoken to in my constituency office, and I speak to many, is frankly fed up with the fact that their expressed will is many times overruled because of organizational structures. This is a bill that will strengthen the rights of individual unionized workers. It will give them hope that the organization to which they're paying dues will be managed in accordance with their will, that they will have a say.

What is the effect? The effect, we believe, is job growth. The effect is a much more stable workplace. The effect will be a workplace that has at its core democratic principles and, at the end of the day, much more hope for the people of Ontario, much more hope for young people looking at the workplace, coming into the workforce, because jobs will be there.

As my colleague mentioned earlier, 370,000-plus net new jobs have been created in this province over the last three years. We have a long way to go because there are still unemployed people in this province. There are still young people who are looking ahead and questioning whether in fact there will be an opportunity for them. The message that we have for those people is, yes, there will be, because through legislation like this we're setting the framework; we're laying the groundwork for them to continue to have hope, to ensure that those jobs will be there.

I am pleased to have been able to take part in this debate. I pass on to my colleague the opportunity to make his remarks.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): It is certainly my pleasure to add some comments with respect to Bill 31. Bill 31, as all the speakers today have outlined, is entitled *An Act to promote economic development and create jobs in the construction industry, to further workplace democracy and to make other amendments to labour and employment statutes*.

I was just reading, as an interesting segue to start, the Canadian Parliamentary Review of summer 1998. I'm sure each member has one of these and has read with great interest the comments and questions raised in that issue. There are questions being put to some rather famous or important people in politics. Mr Conway from the Liberal Party was in there. I think he is a well-recognized and important speaker and commentator on today's issues. Here he says that the economy has always dominated the issues in Ontario. Really what he's saying is that this very debate is about the economy in Ontario. This piece of legislation is about providing some harmony and balance in the workplace while respecting the rights of employers and employees. The balance you're always looking for, as

legislators, is to not in any way put aside traditions but to try to reach some sort of consensus. In many cases it's difficult to reach that consensus that we wish to reach.

Everything this government is doing is all about creating jobs, and I suspect, as Mr Conway said, every government deals with this in some different way. I would refer to the government before ours. It might be suggested that government was defeated on that very issue. They ran into the fundamentals of the economy, were on bedrock, revenues were declining immensely, jobs were falling off — in fact, from the comments today in the House I think there was a loss over that period of government of some 10,000 jobs.

If I were to point to a single event that crystallized this underlying economic debate, I'd have to point to the social contract. What did the social contract do for them? The social contract was the government of the day — government is always going to be criticized — opening up every public sector contract in the province without one single debate. That government was eventually rewarded appropriately.

Every government walks with some trepidation into the field of labour relations. Every single day in labour relations is a challenge to find the balance of jobs and opportunity, which is the agenda of this government, the balance of opportunities for contracts, and unions and union representatives to save face, if they can, in the challenge of competition.

We could look at the globalized world, but you don't have to look very far. If you look at the playing field today of new construction coming into Ontario — competition, if you will, not under the same mandate or regulation of the old rulings in the construction industry — they're not ruling by the same rules.

Much of the opportunity for Ontario workers is at risk. Without some important change and without the leadership of Minister Flaherty and indeed the government's policies, these changes could not take place.

Why are we doing it? As the member for Hamilton Centre later this afternoon I'm sure will suggest — he will rant and he will rave, but I really think any government would come to the same conclusion that ultimately all governments, including the Liberal government, would want to do the right thing for the workers of Ontario to save jobs. After all, if you look back at the social contract, that's what they said: "We're doing this darned thing here but we're saving jobs." They justified it. We're going to use the same argument, justifying jobs.

What kind of jobs are we talking about here this afternoon? The member for Niagara Falls was very quick to point out that we're talking about high-skilled, mainly unionized, high-paying construction jobs. These are very critical jobs for creating infrastructure, but they're also highly skilled, professionalized groups who have knowledge-based jobs. Those are the jobs of the future. Those are the jobs we're currently talking about. These are important partners in this debate, and for any government to ignore that would be a mistake. A partnership is mutually

respectful, recognizing the rights and important opportunities for both groups to move forward.

Mr Christopherson: What do you know about partners?

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Hamilton Centre, come to order.

Mr O'Toole: But deadlock and rudeness certainly isn't one of the solutions.

Mr Christopherson: Neither is stupidity.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Hamilton Centre.

1610

Mr O'Toole: The bill itself amends important legislation. It amends the Labour Relations Act, 1995, the Employment Standards Act and portions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Some of the changes include:

Amendments relating to certification: It's very sensitive; I recognize that. Those partners involved in the debate, the union and the employer, have to find some solution in that process, there's no question about it. The province-wide situation has left them uncompetitive and inflexible in terms of finding a new way of doing business.

Amendments relating to construction: This specifically pertains to that particular sector of the economy, an important sector. In fact, it's rumoured that there's a plethora of opportunity waiting right now, not just in the chemical sector but in a number of project sectors. We're looking towards projects like the Olympics. We're looking to a lot of projects. Ontario is open for business. Get the message. With that we need the infrastructure and we need the jobs in Ontario for Ontario workers. There's no one in this House who will disagree with that, and the issue then is, how do we get there without the big fight?

If fighting is the solution, you'll end up with what they've got at General Motors in Detroit right now: nobody doing anything and meanwhile the imports are coming in at a lower price and the jobs go with them. So let's get with it. You can use the old style ranting and raving, but the underlying fundamentals — I go back to what Mr Conway said — are the reason we're all here. Once we've recognized that, you're then looking for democracy and balance.

The simple suggestion of providing a secret ballot: Who could disagree with that process? It may have worked in the old days at the union hall, with "Raise your hand" and this kind of stuff, and half the people were there and half weren't, but today it's far too important to ignore. The rights of the individual are absolutely paramount and have to be respected in this House and in any House where the process of fairness is in place.

I'm not going to take the time to break into much of the detail, but there are some steps in the project agreements that I do want to cover. It's a very complicated process and, for the members and for those watching today, I've tried to understand it, not as being a knowledgeable participant, essentially.

I have the greatest respect for unions. I learned to work with them. I've worked with unions, because they have been around for longer than I have and they must have

been created for some reason. I suspect you've got to learn to work together.

The times are changing. We must protect the jobs in Ontario. The unions know that, the employers know that and I know that, and certainly Mike Harris knows that. We're trying to create that new climate. I'm surprised, quite honestly, when I think of Mr Phillips, a very respected financial, economic, fundamental type of person. I'm just waiting for how he's going to vote. He knows how important that is. Sean Conway knows how important that is. I'm not surprised that perhaps Mr Christopherson may not agree. How can he? All his checkoff dues will be cancelled.

Project agreements must be industrial projects in the ICI sector or designated by regulation. For instance, the owner of land or entity with interest in land, or an agent who owns the land, who believes there's a project which is of economic significance — a huge project; let's say a new SkyDome — creates a list of bargaining agents. He lists all the people who will be used, the skills and sub-trades to do that project, and the project site within a geographic jurisdiction, and which are bound by provincial construction agreements.

All of those partners, first the person who has all the money and land but needs the skills and expertise of those high-skilled union or non-unionized people to help them complete the project — there's a natural partnership there, but he hasn't got to deal with the whole province. He wants to deal with Sarnia or Sudbury or Ottawa or Kingston or indeed Oshawa, part of my riding. We've got the parties, and I would agree they're all part of that agreement, and without that you never have an agreement and I respect that as well.

Step 2 is here: The proponent gives each bargaining agent on the list a notice that it wants to have a project agreement, together with copies of lists, general descriptions of the project and estimated costs. How big? A billion? It talks about \$45 billion waiting in this province for project agreements. Imagine the jobs that we could lose if we don't get on this. The industry itself knows this is an important thing. Proponents give copies of the material to the affected employers and employee bargaining agents, and also to the Ontario Labour Relations Board, together with evidence of the service. Okay? We've got the Ontario Labour Relations Board acting as the mediator between all these various parties.

Step 3: Bargaining agents on the list have 14 days after receiving notice to apply to the labour relations board for an order that the project may not be subject to the project agreement. So they can back out right off the front. The OLRB shall dismiss applications if the project is in the ICI sector or designated by regulation. Otherwise the OLRB shall grant the application. So they've got this thing. Now they've got to get an agreement.

The agreement isn't provincial. That's the change here. The agreement is a project agreement, or in fact it could be a geographical region, I think. That's up to the parties to decide, I believe. I think they're going to find that where there are high unemployment areas in this province

there's probably a lot of families that are under a lot of strain, because those skilled welders, electricians, whatever, have to travel all over the province for work. That's really difficult, yet there is no work that could be created in their own place, like Sarnia. We're all referring to that example of the member from Sarnia and the petroleum industry and we all, every person in here, including the member for Hamilton Centre — I'm sure he would love to be able to agree with this, but he can't. They won't let him, I'm telling you. He's hostage.

If 40% or more of the bargaining agents on the list agree in writing to giving a notice of project agreement, the proponent gives such notice by sending a copy of the proposed project agreement, together with the names of the bargaining agents that have agreed to the giving of the notice, to each bargaining unit, and a copy is again sent to the OLRB. Remember this project is very simple: democracy. One union, one vote. It's very simple, not that complicated.

Mr Maves: The unions support that.

Mr O'Toole: The unions certainly support it. I wouldn't like to leave the impression that they're anti-democratic. They certainly aren't. They're not. They're very guarded to the procedures and bylaws, and I believe they stick to them. I don't think there was great disruption when they introduced that compulsory secret ballot stuff. That was all kind of optics. They wanted that. It's there, they're doing it, it's not a problem.

Each individual employee or member of that union now has a significant responsibility. Don't complain to that leadership if the project agreement doesn't suit you. You'd better become involved and make your leadership aware of your concerns. That's what we do here. That's the job of the members in opposition and in the third party, to listen to the concerns of the membership.

Mr Christopherson: Where are the public hearings then? This debate is about shutting down debate.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Hamilton Centre, come to order.

Mr O'Toole: Step 5: Bargaining agents may give notice of approval or disapproval of a proposed agreement to proponents within 30 days of receiving notice, giving a copy again to the labour relations board.

At this point we have the agreement that there is going to possibly be a sectoral agreement here. So at this point if we have at least 60% of the bargaining agents giving notice to a proponent approving the agreement, the agreement is approved. It's majority; that's the way democracy works. At the end of the day there will be a vote here on this very bill and there will be members who don't agree, but it's democracy and it has worked and served us well and it will continue to serve us well. Again, a copy goes to the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

Now, everybody is covered by that agreement, but it's a proportional thing, remember. Each of the particular skilled trades doesn't earn the same amount, but whatever is enclosed is proportionately shared among each of the different unions or skilled trade groups.

A bargaining agent that did not give notice of approval may challenge by giving notice to the Ontario Labour Relations Board within 10 days after receiving the material as specified in step 6 if proposed agreement would result in reduction in the rate of total wage and benefit for members of challengers that is greater in proportion than that that was reduced by the new contract —

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): What does that all mean?

Mr O'Toole: What happens is, if one of the groups is implied to receive a disproportionate reduction, the OLRB can override that and insist that there be no less than any other group would have agreed to. So there's no penalty.

If, for instance, they have not notified, Mr Bradley, for your information — I want you to listen because it's clear to me you haven't read it, and what you need to understand is, if I haven't consulted with one of the specific trades that I need to finish the project, that trade does not come under the conditions of the project.

1620

It's very technical, and that's why I've gone to the pains of outlining, for the member from Hamilton, so that they understand the first principle was democracy — one union, one vote — and the next principle was that all persons would not be treated any less fairly than the other members of that agreement, and members excluded from debating the agreement would not be affected by the agreement. That's a fair and reasonable solution. I believe the minister and his parliamentary assistant, Mr Maves, have worked tirelessly on this bill.

There would be those who would say to me that there are some questions that have been raised, and they are justifiable. I have personally asked the minister, "Give me some of the answers to these questions," and I'm satisfied that the reasonable answers have emerged. I'm going to share this with the member for Hamilton Centre. It may even be considered to be caucus material, but in the interest of moving forward and creating and saving jobs for Ontario, I'm going to ask one of the pages to share this information with Mr Christopherson. It may help him in his comments and he may not quite as vehemently discharge his duty.

What surprised me when this bill that we're talking about here was introduced on June 4 was that for the first seven days after first reading there wasn't one question raised by either the Liberals or the NDP. I'm surprised; not one question. I think what happened, when that discussion paper got out and the trade unions agreed, they finally started to get the questions from their supporters.

Mr Bradley: I'll give a more balanced view of this legislation, if you don't mind, than was given by the government member.

First of all, I want to say you have handled this the same way you handled the textbook distribution. You are so interested in that case in having photo opportunities for Conservative members at various schools that you're bungling what could be a good idea. The same situation exists with Bill 31. You know, some initial negotiations took place over this legislation which were quite success-

ful, and there was almost a consensus reached. I believe that many of the people who were involved in discussions thought there was a consensus that had been reached. Then, all of a sudden, the minister — we don't know why, but I suspect I know why — had some people influence him to make changes to the legislation, to make inclusions to the legislation which broke that consensus. But that is typical of the Harris style of handling these matters as opposed to Bill Davis.

I can remember. I sat in this House with Bill Davis on the other side and I didn't always agree with him, but I'll tell you, he knew how to reach a consensus, because he had a sense of balance, a sense of where middle Ontario was, and he wasn't interested only in filling the coffers of the Progressive Conservative Party with money from developers and huge corporations. Rather, he was interested in some balance in this province.

I know that the changes contained in Bill 31, the kinds of changes which broke that consensus, will no doubt result in even greater contributions coming from developers in this province to the Progressive Conservative Party. In fact, that's why under Bill 36 you have increased the limits on the amount of money that corporations and individuals may contribute to individual candidates and contribute to political parties during election campaigns and other times. I suspect there may be just a component of that in this legislation.

What we have to know this afternoon is that we're not even debating this legislation; we're debating yet another motion on the part of the Harris government to choke off debate, to close down debate on an important piece of legislation, which should have much more extensive debate so the public can become acquainted with the various issues that are a part of Bill 31, the construction trades legislation.

That is typical of this government. Almost weekly now we have two or three motions of closure. You call it time allocation. These are motions which are designed to end debate, to cut off debate, to limit debate, to exclude the opportunity for the placing of amendments, to exclude the opportunity for the public to have input. It reminds me of Bill 160, where you're only interested in ramming that through the Legislature, using the brand-new rules that were imposed by Mike Harris in this Legislature, written by some of the neo-cons, the 20-somethings, who come into this Legislature to the right of Attila the Hun in their views.

The member for Etobicoke-Humber, in my view, is a moderate compared to some of the younger people, the whiz kids or the former whiz kids — I don't want him to get angry when I say this — who used to work for Mulroney, the member for Nepean, who was given charge of rewriting the rules so that only the government would benefit by the changes to the rules.

The best thing that can happen with this legislation is that there is extensive debate that takes place on this legislation.

Generally speaking, you can change the labour laws of this province, the collective agreement laws of this prov-

ince, so that they're the lowest common denominator. You can make them like Indonesia or like Mississippi or Tennessee or some state like that and, following your logic, you would say, "Then Ontario will be open for business." I think what people want to see is labour peace in the province. I'm not convinced that by breaking the consensus — and indeed it's rather miraculous that there was a consensus that was reached — by including other provisions in this bill, that in fact you're going to create more labour unrest than you are labour peace. It's not as though you have to buy the peace. It's simply a matter of sitting down and having that consensus developed.

Now you won't even send this to committee. This logically should go out to a committee, at least even during the last weeks of this session, so that we can have some public input. Members of the government have read certain letters into the record, members of the opposition have read other letters into the record, sometimes by similar groups or the same people, expressing different points of view. I think once they had a look at the legislation many of the people who initially said, "You know, we think we can buy into this," said, "But we didn't know these other provisions were contained in the bill." That's where the consensus broke down.

I think you had a pretty unique opportunity here to come up with an agreement that was going to be acceptable to all and I would have applauded that. I think that is the wave of the future, trying to find that kind of consensus. If you had done that, if you had stuck with the original agreement that you had instead of trying to poison the agreement with some new provisions, then I think we would have achieved what you wanted to achieve in the province and all of us would have been delighted to see that happen. But you didn't do it, because there's always somebody — I don't know whether the people in the Premier's office or the extreme right wing of the caucus — who starts insisting that their views prevail rather than the more moderate members of caucus or the more moderate members of the advisory group to the Premier and to the Progressive Conservative government.

As a result, I'm afraid what you're going to see is more confrontation instead of people working together, which I think would have been good for the province and was possible when the negotiations took place, because Ontario construction workers in fact had been working with the Minister of Labour and with the contractors in this province towards everyone's common goal, which is fairness and competitiveness in Ontario's construction industry.

The people who work in the construction industry themselves, as workers, don't want to see it uncompetitive, because they know that will work against their best interests. So they want to find something that's fair and competitive at the same time. I thought you had the agreement. I really did. I was quite amazed, I must say, and I was quite delighted to see the possibility that that agreement had been achieved. But then it got torpedoed by some elements within the government — I don't know who they are — because you went from a win-win situa-

tion to at least a win-lose and maybe a lose-lose situation if we start seeing the kind of labour disruptions that I hope don't happen in the province, because I hope the government will modify this bill, though I haven't seen an indication that they're going to do it.

We will need to hear the concerns of construction workers. I want to hear the concerns of contractors, I want to hear the concerns of employers across Ontario, and that's why we believe there should be public hearings after second reading of this bill. And you will get second reading because you're imposing a closure motion to shut off debate on the bill. You're going to get second reading, without a doubt.

What I think would be progressive on your part, what I think would be enlightened on the part of the government, is to then allow for public hearings. Maybe you would hear from people on both sides: the contractors and the employers and the workers themselves, the representatives of the unions. You might hear something that would make you make a couple of changes to the legislation. It would make it more acceptable, which would ensure that we would have relative peace in the construction industry in this province and would indeed allow us to be competitive.

I think that opportunity is there. I don't know who advises on this, but time and again, they seem to want to push these things through and force them on people and force a confrontation. That's most unfortunate in this case and in so many other cases.

1630

This bill assigns a number of new powers to the labour relations board, yet I think people who know the business know that you have severely cut the board's funding and staff. We have to ask the question: Are they going to have the resources to assume these new responsibilities?

That reminds me — and I think all members would know this — of the significant cutbacks we've seen in the Ministry of Labour offices in our communities. Sometimes they've closed them right down, sometimes they've regionalized them, sometimes they've just cut the staff drastically.

Both employers and employees who are looking to resolve matters with the assistance of the local office of the Ministry of Labour are unable to do so. When a person phones and says, "I haven't been paid by my employer for six months and I'm looking for some redress" — most employers pay their employees. It's not a problem with most employees out there. They don't have to object because they're going to get paid. They're going to be treated fairly. There may be some employers who don't do that, so people are phoning our constituency offices and they're saying, "I phoned the local office of the Ministry of Labour and they said, 'It will take eight months before we can even delve into this matter, let alone come to a resolution.'"

I know it looks good to cut these numbers of people off the staff. You can go around, particularly the right-wing people, and say, "Look, we've chopped government way down." I am talking of the ideologues in this case, not just small-c conservative people, but the real ideologues who

say, "Look, we've cut all this government way back." In some cases, people generally are going to agree with you.

I think where both employers and employees need these services on a timely basis to resolve these kinds of problems, they're going to say, "I think it's a good investment to have those employees in a local office of the Ministry of Labour to deal with these matters."

It's the same as consumer relations. Once again, an overwhelming number of companies and small businesses that I know of deal on a very fair basis with their customers. They're good to them, they're fair-minded, they're up front. But there are people out there who are not, and that's why we need the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, for instance, just as we need the Ministry of Labour, to help those people who are being dealt with in an unscrupulous manner by certain people in business, who give a bad reputation to their entire sector when that shouldn't be the case.

You hear people talk about one sector of the economy or another; the paving business, for instance. You often hear a lot of complaints about the paving business. I can tell you there are a lot of good people in the paving business out there. They're honest with their customers, they do a good job, they come back to see that the product they have provided and the service they have provided is satisfactory to the customer. But there are some fly-by-night operators who give a bad name to the business, and I think governments have a responsibility to protect the consumers, the residents of this province against those people, and also to protect good business people in that business from unfair competition from those who try to cut corners and fool people with contracts which are less than desirable, contracts which may not even be legal.

I want to touch on something the member for Durham East said. I heard him get up and denounce the former NDP government in this province for bringing in the social contract. He was busy telling everybody in the province that the NDP brought in a bill which abrogated every collective agreement in this province in the public sector. He tried to suggest that he cared about the sanctity of the collective agreement. Then I find out that, of course, he voted for it. His government voted for it. You can't criticize it if you voted for it, and that's what happened. The Conservative Party voted with the NDP government on the social contract legislation. Every time I hear Conservatives get up to criticize the NDP for implementing the social contract in this province, I ask, why did they vote for it if they thought the social contract was so unfair? They obviously agreed with the NDP government at that time.

Our party did not vote for it, which is why I don't get up and compliment it, but I know the Conservative Party voted for it. I think they're being — you can't use the word "hypocritical" in this House? I don't think you can.

Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber): No, you can't.

Mr Bradley: No, I'm just asking if you can. There's a certain phraseology, I say to my friend from Humber, you can use that's okay and one that isn't. But I won't use it.

I'll just say I can't use it. But anyway, it's odd — I can say that — that they would be critical of that.

I again look at public hearings as being good for a lot of bills. I wish the government, for instance, would put Bill 36 as well out to public hearings and entertain meaningful amendments.

If you do that, people at least feel they've had their say, particularly if you incorporate some of the views that were expressed in the legislation. You can't do it, I understand, in all cases. If the amendments offered or the suggestions offered for amendments totally obliterate the bill, I understand why a government's not going to implement that. But sometimes it simply improves the bill. It seeks to clarify in some cases, it seeks to improve in some way or another the bill. If you don't go out to public hearings, you can't get that input and all members of the Legislature can't be exposed to it.

I think members of all parties have to have available to them the information provided by contractors, by employers, by unions, by employees themselves on this bill to be able to better understand the implications of it. It's hard to do that simply on paper or to listen to the government side or the opposition side because there tends to be a rigidity in this House on positions: a suspicion which is natural on the part of the opposition about the government and the government being dismissive of the opposition. That's why I believe public hearings would be very valuable in this legislation, and I say similarly in Bill 36, which allows huge increases in the amount of money that corporations and individuals can contribute to candidates and political parties and allows massive increases in the spending during election campaigns, thereby Americanizing our system of elections in the province of Ontario.

These are two bills where I think public hearings would be useful. There's another public hearing out there, I don't know why they're even having it. It's a one-page bill. I shouldn't say I don't know why. I think it's because they want to block anything else from going to the justice committee. I think that's the reason, because the member for Welland-Thorold had a motion to have the matter of Ipperwash before the justice committee and the Conservative government decided it would send out for hearings some other bill that has one page in it. Here's a bill that's pretty thick, here's a bill that has a lot of implications, here's a bill that has considerable opposition and a bill that has some good suggestions to be made about it by others. In fact, that will not happen.

I want to allow an opportunity for my colleagues from Renfrew North and Essex South to participate in this debate as well, a debate, which I remind those who are watching, to close off debate on an important bill in this province. In wrapping up my remarks on this, I think that governments benefit, as well as the public and certainly the opposition, by having public hearings on bills of this kind, by having serious entertainment of amendments, serious consideration of amendments by government to make the bill acceptable. I think this is a chance that was a great opportunity for government to bring representatives of labour and business together, the employees and

employers, and come up with a reasonable consensus. I thought the consensus was there and I'm sorry that the government broke that consensus.

I note to the public that, once again, a record number of time allocation motions or motions closing off debate have been implemented by the Harris government under the new procedural rules imposed in this Legislature, which seriously erode the power of the individual member of this House and of course the opportunity of the opposition to influence government legislation or to slow down the process of the government implementing its bills. I don't agree with most of what the government does, but even those out there in the public who do agree with the government believe the government moves too quickly, too drastically and without taking into consideration the consequences of its actions.

1640

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): It's a pleasure for me today to have the opportunity to speak for a few moments on government motion number 22, which is of course a time allocation motion.

If anybody were to misunderstand the fact that there is a great deal of opposition to Bill 31, to which the time allocation motion refers, they only need to have been travelling, I understand, on the Gardiner this morning when there was a large sign that was hung that said, "Bill 31 hurts construction families." It was at the Dufferin Street bridge over the Gardiner, or perhaps it's the Don Valley, but in any event, traffic was made aware of the opposition to this bill.

The member for Niagara Falls said that the opposition would get up and read some letters. Well, we certainly will because I think the letters he was referring to may have been written prior to the introduction of Bill 31 when, as my colleague from St Catharines had pointed out, there was some consensus on some ways that the construction industry and construction companies and others in this province could have a view towards a better understanding of each other's position and make some progress.

I have a letter that's dated today, "Area Building Trades Stage Protest over Bill 31." Sarnia was mentioned to no end as being the example of where this bill would be of benefit.

"Sarnia: area building trades engaged in a lawful protest near local construction sites today in response to the Harris government's undemocratic decision to shut down debate on Bill 31. 'Members showed that they will not let their democratic labour rights be trampled on by this government without a fight,' said Bob Humphreys, business manager of UA Local 663."

It goes on to say, "The government is showing its disrespect for workers and democratic principles through its refusal to hold public hearings or entertain amendments to the legislation," said Jim Bradshaw, business manager of Sheet Metal Workers' Local 539. 'If the government does not make changes to this legislation, it will destabilize labour relations throughout Ontario.'"

We are debating today this closure motion, this limit of debate, this undemocratic process, and certainly this construction association believes that to be the case.

Bill 31 makes changes to the Labour Relations Act, the Employment Standards Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and therefore certainly should receive its appropriate amount of debate. As well, we feel it should go to committee and should also go to public hearings.

The members for Niagara Falls and I think it was York-Mackenzie used the words "democratic rights," "respect for democracy," "workplace democracy," "fairness and balance." They used those words in the context, I suspect, of Bill 31. I use them in the context of this resolution. To me, the resolution today to limit debate on this bill, to make sure that it doesn't go out for public hearings, to have absolutely no debate at third reading, is certainly undemocratic, has no respect for democracy, is not fair and certainly isn't balanced.

If the government thought this bill were so important, they could have called the bill back in that time period when we normally would have been here from the second or third week in March through April, May and June. For whatever reason, the government chose not to call us back at the normal date on the legislative calendar. We were away from this Legislature a full month. Now they come along and say: "But it's important that we get at this bill. We have to get this into law. It means a lot to Ontario."

I'm not debating that. In fact, I'll debate little about the bill itself today because others have, and others who may follow me will have comments about the bill. Even though we're debating a resolution to shut down democracy in this Legislature, you will hear about the bill itself because it's the only chance that's left to speak about it. After today, as you know, Speaker, there will be a vote taken around the 6 o'clock mark and this bill will be history, because when it's called next, as it says in the resolution, "when Bill 31 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment; and at such time, the bill shall be ordered for third reading." Then on the very same day, Speaker, as you well know, there will be two hours for third reading debate.

There aren't any amendments. Most of the members of this Legislature will not have had their democratic opportunity to speak to the bill, and we'll be left with two hours of debate. Big deal. That won't leave much time to make any impression on the government.

Bill 31 has had it. Bill 31 is going to be law and it will pass third reading on the very day the bill is called. Then what happens, of course, is it goes for royal assent and then will be enacted when the government chooses.

I'll be interested actually to see how quickly the bill is enacted after it receives royal assent. I suspect there shouldn't be any delay whatsoever, because what we've had this month alone — the bill was first introduced for first reading on June 4, so two weeks have passed of this very critical time where the government says, "We can't wait another minute; we can't have another day's debate;

we can't take it to committee; we can't have any public hearings; we can't let anybody comment on it; we can't give anybody an opportunity to at least propose amendments." We don't have time for that, but it sat around somewhere on a government desk for two weeks and here we are today ready to shut down debate.

It may be that if the government rams this bill through, like it's going to do, there are some who would suggest that it may backfire on them. I read from a recent article in the *Toronto Star*, Monday, June 15. The writer of this article says it's puzzling. "It" — this bill — "may prove to be the work of a gang that can't shoot straight." I certainly agree with that; in fact, I think many times this government's been characterized as "fire, ready, aim."

It says, of a gang that can't shoot straight: "The purpose seems to be anti-union. It is to allow no-strike contracts on major industrial projects, such as refineries and chemical complexes — or Olympic facilities, if we need them.

"But the effect may well be perverse." The writer of this goes on to remind us: "The BC government of W.A.C. Bennett decreed such no-strike contracts on the huge Peace and Columbia River power projects in the 1960s.

"Workers on the dams — guaranteed whatever their unions won elsewhere — raked in double and triple time and poured cash into union strike funds.

"Flush with cash to finance strikes amid a mega-project boom, the unions had a virtually free ride to higher wages. Employers paid whatever was needed to get a deal, any deal. BC's wage structure hasn't come down since."

Whether you agree with this or not, whether that's what will happen as a result of this bill or not, they're merely pointing out that historically, when you take this kind of action, when you don't take the time to get it right — and God knows we've seen a number of cases where they haven't taken the time to get it right; I think we have five property tax bills that we've dealt with.

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): And counting.

Mr Crozier: "And counting," as my colleague says. That's right. we may have even more because it isn't right yet. If you don't take time to get it right the first time, the consequences can be severe, costly.

It was pointed out by my colleague from St Catharines that there was some agreement on this bill, that there was a concerted effort by the construction trade unions, by the employers, by government, to put something in place that would bring some additional stability to the workplace in Ontario. What they don't like, and nobody likes, is when you get blindsided, when you get a deal and you shake on it, and then somehow between that and the printing of the bill the deal has changed. I don't argue at all that these trade unions shouldn't be upset. If that wasn't part of the original deal, then I think they have the right, and we have that same right in here, to demand that there be further debate on it and that at the very least it go to committee and public hearings.

1650

Maybe the government feels there's been enough second reading debate. That's fine. Then do the right

thing, do the democratic thing, do the fair thing: Send it to committee. Let us review the bill clause by clause. Let us hear from the public. Let's hear where your deal was the right one the first time but how you botched it. And let's get back to the table and make it right so that we don't find ourselves somewhere down the road, later this summer, next fall, whenever it might be, in a position where we have to deal with another piece of legislation just to fix this up.

I refer to another article that points out where this original agreement may have gone wrong. It's suggested that it's because it also included as a clause taking away the power of the Ontario Labour Relations Board to give automatic certification to unions whose organizing drives have been thwarted by unfair labour practices. I don't think any of us wants anything unfair in labour-business relations today. I think everybody wants to be fair with each other. But there are those times when someone isn't fair, when somebody doesn't play by the rules, when somebody doesn't use, as was said by the member for York-Mackenzie, fairness and balance. That's one of the things they're saying should be in this legislation so that we can get it right.

But it says Bill 31 doesn't end there: "Buried in the legislation is a section dealing with non-construction employers. These employers who are not in the construction business have or used to have unionized carpenters, electricians and other tradesmen on their payrolls. Under current law, such employers are required, when contracting out construction work, to use unionized builders." These are agreements that have been long standing, that have, in the words of some of the government members, and I would agree, helped make Ontario what it is today.

Employers have fought this law at the Ontario Labour Relations Board and in the courts, but in most cases have lost. Now they're getting their way through legislation. I would have thought that the government would have used the courts as a sounding board for what this legislation should or should not include, and that they wouldn't just go bull-headed ahead and simply legislate it out of existence.

This article goes on to say that the unions were consulted about the project agreement section, not the rest. I suggest that some of this should be taken into consideration and that we should take that time that we need, we should take some time in committee, we should take some time in public hearings to get it right, and not just stand here and say, "I have had some sort of agreement that's fallen apart, and notwithstanding that, we're going to go boldly ahead."

In concluding, I want to get back to that part of the standing orders that's been used today and just very briefly my own personal feeling on this. I thought that when elected I would come to this Legislature and have the opportunity to speak to those issues that affected my riding. I have lost track of the number of times that this government has brought in time allocation. You know, I think it's just as much mismanagement of the legislative agenda as it is anybody else's fault. Somehow this

legislation. They give the marching orders to the members of the government, who follow orders. They don't dare question the whiz kids, because they're told by the Premier's office, "Whatever's in the bill has to be adhered to," and if the whiz kids say —

Interjection.

Mr Collier: The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale doesn't like me questioning the whiz kids because the whiz kids are his bosses. The whiz kids may be the bosses of the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, they may pull his chain, but they don't control the opposition. I know it gets touchy around here.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): Who wrote this speech? **Mr Collier:** The member for Nepean also gets very touchy if you mention the whiz kids. They rise up to defend the whiz kids in the back room, but the whiz kids do not control the opposition. There are just too many apologists for whatever the whiz kids do: "It's right; it came from the whiz kids."

Here's another bill which I'm sure was concocted by the whiz kids in the back room, where they don't want the public to ask questions. When the public doesn't ask questions, the public basically has no input, it has no opportunity to find out what's in this legislation.

Bill 31, like most pieces of legislation, is quite complex for ordinary citizens. That's why you want to have good, temperate debate. You want ordinary citizens to get involved in the process. This government wants to exclude ordinary citizens. This government has, as I said, a set agenda, ramming things through so the ordinary person doesn't have time to find out what this government is doing until after the fact. Then they find out their hospitals are closed, they find out roads have been down-loaded, they find out that they have these huge new government responsibilities moved into the back rooms where ministers have control, because this government is into government by regulation, not legislation.

They believe it's basically government by decree. So what do they do with Bill 31? They have a decree today. The decree says: "You can't debate it. We've got to close down debate." That's what they do. They feel that there isn't that give and take of legislative responsibility. It's essentially a formula which says, "We, the government, on the orders of the whiz kids, decree that this should become law and the public has no right and the opposition has no right to debate, question or get into the bill."

That's the pattern of this government. For three years that's what they've done. It started with Bill 26, when they basically took powers from the Legislature, from the legislative branch, and they brought it to the executive branch. But this government has even gone further. It's not even the executive branch any more, because many of the cabinet ministers don't know what's in these bills because they've taken it one step back to the whiz kids' branch, so it's the whiz kids who basically are doing a lot of the things cabinet ministers used to do.

That is the pattern of this motion that we are debating about closing down debate on Bill 31, because there is an urgency here to ram this bill through and change some

Interjection.

— taxes —

The Acting Speaker: Member for Halton Centre. **Mr Collier:** We want to have them in the public domain so we can question them but, as you know, they are never in the public domain. They are lurking in the shadows of this government. They are unaccountable, unselected people who essentially tell this government when to do it, how to do it and to ram through bills like Bill 31 for some agenda that they've concocted because it fits part of this grand formula they have about changing the face of government in this province.

It's shameful today that while we're here honouring the great United Empire Loyalists, who are really the founding backbone of this province, who went against the revolutionary, radical United States and came to make a choice for the basic tenets of parliamentary democracy — they made that brave stand and came here. They came here and made that decision because they went against something that was against their traditions and principles. Yet this government, on the day the Loyalists were here, basically says: "We are changing those traditions. We are doing away with the traditions of debate, of parliamentary, legislative accountability." That's why I say it's shameful that today of all days, when we honour these great Canadian patriots, they dare to ram another bill through under closure. That's what they think of tradition. That's what they think of parliamentary democracy.

They are basically making a government by decree. They are making a government that is not accountable, a government that just recklessly through the House without any appreciation of the sacrifices and the contribution that Ontarians have made for the last 200 years to make this a province that people are proud of. But if they continue with this closure and shutting down of

The people of Ontario have a right to know what's in these bills and they have a right to have the process orderly so they can question this government. That is what the real debate here is about: Does the public have a right to find out what's in bills? Does the public have the right whereby they can have input? Does the public have a right to question the whiz kids, perhaps?

We'd like to see a picture of these whiz kids who control this province. Let's have a picture of them on the back walls here. We have the Speakers, we have former Premiers; let's put the pictures of the whiz kids, their names, phone numbers, their fax numbers. Who are they? Who are these whiz kids who are making this kind of legislation? They're setting up the way this government operates, how it affects people, so the members of the government should make these people public. That's why we want to have their pictures, their phone numbers and

things which are going to affect how workers organize; how workers are able to participate in their unions. This affects, again, millions of Ontarians who are going to see these labour laws changed, and some of these impacts are going to change how they make a living.

has tabled exactly the same motion as it relates to Bill 36, which is the election finances changes to how we're going to run the next election and how the next election is going to be paid for and who gets to make contributions. So we'll go through this same debate likely on Monday. The House is set to rise on Thursday. It doesn't take a political scientist to see what's going on. It's got nothing to do with democracy; it's the opposite. That's what is so infuriating about listening to the members stand up and give the mantra about, "We care about democracy and we care about fairness." Bull.

Your game plan is real clear. Even though the wheels fell off your wagon in terms of Bill 31 — your minister introduced it saying, "We've got support from everybody," it's in the Hansard. "Talk to the employers, talk to the unions. We've got everybody on side." No, you don't. But even though the wheels are falling off that wagon, this government has decided that no matter what anybody says, they're going to make this the law, probably as early as Monday, and that's it. Nobody gets a say. How, by any definition that one can imagine, is that democracy?

I realize everybody splits hairs and we all dance on technicalities sometimes, depending on the nature of the debate and what's going on in here, but I've got to tell you, this is so blatant in terms of it being undemocratic. A majority government introduces a bill, the people whom it affects go absolutely wild because of the damage you're doing to them and their livelihood and their quality of life, and the government's response is to shut down debate. It's the same thing on election finances. Think about it a minute. The government introduces sweeping changes to the way we're going to run the next election, they change the rules to allow their corporate friends to contribute twice as much, shorten the election, raise the amount of money they can spend — and they're the ones who have access to the most money — make a number of these huge changes that are not part of the all-party commission agreement, notwithstanding we have difficulty with that, but outside and apart from that, they're making incredible changes to the way we run elections.

What could possibly go more to the heart of democracy than the rules for running the election? They didn't follow the usual tradition of all-party agreement before they introduced it, and when we started to raise a whole lot of questions, and yes, a whole lot of anger, their response? A few minutes ago they tabled the same closure motion on that issue as we're having now. I defy any member of the government to stand up and explain to the people of Ontario how that in any way resembles, let alone promotes, democracy, where nobody else gets a say in the rules of how the next election is going to be run. But that's exactly what's going on in Ontario right now.

As I said, this doesn't require a whole lot of university degrees to figure out. The game plan is they're just going to hunker down, pray that the media don't make too big a deal about these things, and just get to next Thursday. If they can get to next Thursday, the House rises and then we get into the summer, and traditionally in Ontario during

debate, if they keep going down this reckless road of putting off debate, it will no longer be a province we can be proud of.

1710

Mr Christopherson: I appreciate the opportunity, as limited as it is, to enter into the debate. I think it is important, as colleagues of mine have already mentioned, to remember that the main point of what we're debating right now is the fact that you're muzzling democracy on this motion. You're shutting down any kind of debate beyond a couple of hours, probably on Monday, which will constitute all that Ontarians and opposition members will get in terms of input.

It's so galling to listen especially to the backbenchers stand up and carp about democracy and fairness and listening, and this motion is about the opposite. This motion is about shutting down debate. The motion guarantees there are no public hearings. The motion guarantees there's no opportunity to put amendments. One almost begs the question, why bother?

I'm sure they probably had that debate in their caucus: "Why do we bother going into the Legislature? We've taken out of the rules so much of any real opportunity for the opposition to talk anyway and we don't let the public speak, so maybe we could save ourselves a whole lot of time and just not bother." I'm sure Tories ask themselves that. Tragically, if they could get away with an omnibus bill that would do that and revert everything that requires a decision into the cabinet room, the secrecy of cabinet decisions, into regulatory powers, that would be the end of this place.

There are literally hundreds of letters pouring in from local unions of construction trades from all across the province who are beside themselves with frustration, anger and shock that this is happening. They can't believe this is happening to them.

Let me say that it has been the record of this government that every time they've gone after a segment of the population, they've been fairly successful, unfortunately, at isolating that part of the society, and the rest of the population sort of looks the other way and says, "Oh well, that's not me." I really believe we're getting to the point, some kind of critical mass, where people are now realizing that if they didn't get hit yesterday, and you're not a construction worker so you're not getting hit today, by God, you will get hit tomorrow. How can you not believe that they're going to come after you?

That's what the construction workers are going through right now, for those who haven't paid much attention to going after public sector workers, going after teachers, going after nurses, going after the poor, going after virtually every segment of society. For some reason, there were construction workers who thought, "This really doesn't affect me." By God, I'm sure you're realizing now that it does affect you. If you haven't been hit yet, you will. No one is safe.

I want to bring to the attention of this House that while we're debating this closure motion, this shutting down of democracy, I've just been informed that the government

caucus, which generates the majority vote, that individual can virtually dictate what the laws of the province are going to be. So there is a concept called the "tyranny of the majority," and a recognition historically in our country that you offer an opportunity for the minority to voice their opinion, to express their disagreement, to offer up changes, to offer up improvements.

That's the way this place is supposed to work, but you've ratcheted down the rules so tight that it now is an exception whenever there is a controversial bill. Oh yeah, we've got a couple of bills going out for public hearings. One of them is the condo act. Now, to those people who live in condominiums and want to see some of these changes, I grant you, that's important, I'm not trying to trivialize that, but for the government to suggest that they believe in the concept of public input when they send out a bill on condos but say no to the bills that are going to change the election laws of the province and how elections are paid for and who pays for them — for a bill that affects hundreds of thousands of workers and the rights they already have, you say: "No. No input. We don't want to hear from you. You've got nothing to say to us. We will rule by edict." That's what you're doing. Your edict takes a few days to put in place, but as the result of your changes, you can introduce a bill on Monday morning and that sucker's law by Thursday night.

That's what is happening right here, right now, at this moment. You're shutting down democracy and denying the democratic rights that are inherent in being a citizen of this province to everybody who's affected by Bill 31, and we are talking hundreds of thousands of people. You're affecting and denying the legitimate democratic rights of every citizen when you ram through Bill 36, which changes the rules for the next election. Shameful. Disgusting.

The Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario issued a news release on the 17th. The context for this is that the Minister of Labour said he felt he had the moral right to introduce and ram through Bill 31 because he had the support, as the member from Durham-whatever said about partnerships, of all the partners. You don't. You do not have their support. Every one of them is clamouring for an opportunity to express their democratic viewpoint. This debate is about you shutting it down.

Pat Dillon, who is the head of the provincial building trades, said:

"As a result of a lack of consultation with the industry, Bill 31 is an ill-conceived piece of legislation that will have far-reaching negative impacts on the construction industry. The government's bullying of Bill 31 through the Legislature without public hearings has forced our hand to take responsive actions."

John Cartwright, who is the head of the Toronto Central Ontario Building and Construction Trades Council, said this, "Bill 31 is a gift to some of Ontario's largest and most powerful corporations." By the way, the very same corporations that under the changes to the election

Today you have advised the table and the rest of us that you're going to do the same thing with the election finances changes. God help us all if you get away with this. For some of us sitting here, it's hard to fathom. Why isn't this the lead story? Why isn't this headlines? It ought to be.

I want to put on the record — not that anybody over there is listening or, for that matter, gives a damn — what the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council has been saying about this over the last couple of days. Yes, it has taken a while for them to gear up, but I can tell you, it took a lot of time for the lawyers to analyse the bill that you have presented because of the complexities involved in it and the complexities in the construction industry. Certainly I've felt it, and I've been going through this for over three years, but I've got to believe there are people out there in the construction industry who've said to themselves, "This thing is just so preposterous in terms of what Bill 31 says that surely to God there will be an opportunity for us to point out how unfair this is and, for that matter, that it won't work." The process itself contained in the bill won't work.

1720

I think people began to be aware over the last few days that, yes, indeed, once again you're prepared to stand up and say one thing, "Salute the flag; God bless country, Queen, God and democracy," and all those speeches you make about democracy and fairness, and then you introduce a motion that shuts down democracy and allows nobody an opportunity to have a say. And on the day that we're debating that, you table another motion that does exactly the same thing to the rules of the next election. Honestly, if it were any other country and one of you were asked about what's going on, you'd say: "God, that's underocratic. We've got to do something. Somebody call the UN. Somebody do something."

It always amazes me; they always laugh at that line and roll their eyes. Where do you think these notions of freedoms and rights come from? Why do you think they're in place? Do you think we don't count? Do you think what happens in here doesn't matter? Quite the contrary. We are pointed to as a model of democracy because we don't let those with the greatest power and influence buy their way into power and abuse the power that a majority government is given.

Let's face it, as long as a Premier has the support of the caucus, it is virtually a dictatorship. I'm not blaming you on that; that is all democracies. As long as you've got a majority government, where you control the majority of seats, if the Premier continually has the support of the

laws can double the amount of contributions they can make to your re-election war chest. What a coincidence.

Mr Cartwright goes on to say, "Allowing a billion-dollar bank to rip up its union agreements has nothing to do with fairness or economic development."

"That's exactly what's happening under Bill 31. They're one of the partners. If you say they're wrong, why don't you have the guts to let them have a public hearing to put their case forward? You can respond to it and show where they're wrong. That's all it takes.

If that's all we are, obstructionist and knee-jerk reactionaries and whatever you do we oppose and everybody out there, the whole world, is against you, it's a big conspiracy, everybody's against you, then strengthen us all out. Go on, strengthen us all out. Let us go out to public hearings where we have rules and we have procedures, where people get an opportunity to have their say and introduce their arguments. Then you can respond and you can have your people come forward and put their arguments in the public arena.

At the end of the day the public, who own this democracy, by the way — they only let you run it for a while; that applies to all of us, whoever wins the election — the people who own this democracy can make up their own minds. I'll tell you, I'll stand by that. If the majority of the phone calls that come into my office afterwards were to say, "That was just a whole lot of bunk; the government was absolutely right on that," then I'd have to accept that, and it sure wouldn't be the leading issue I'd use in the next election, would it?

But that's not going to happen. You know that. The issues that are being raised by the construction industry are legitimate and they deserve to be respected. This PC Party used to care a lot about respect and tradition. You're so good at making speeches about it, but when it comes time to put democracy on the line, you choose unilateral action, elitism, exclusionary methods every time.

It really is unbelievable. It's almost surreal to think that I'm standing here in the Ontario Legislature at a time when a bill of this significance is being rammed through and we're debating the motion that shuts down debate. You've just tabled the motion that would do the same thing to your bill which changes the election laws of the province of Ontario and allows your friends to give you even more money to affect the outcome of the next election. This House rises next Thursday and there's nobody in the world who gets a say. It's amazing.

Mr Dillon goes on to say in the letter he forwarded to the Minister of Labour on June 16 — I want to again remind members, because it's crucial to this debate, that the government tried to legitimize their right to both introduce this bill and ram it through based on having the support of all the players, the partners, that are affected. That was the premise. Mr Dillon, whose council represents, I believe, well over 100,000 unionized workers in the construction industry, says this:

"Dear Mr Flaherty:

"You have been making statements that the provincial 'project agreements.' You do not speak for us and have been misrepresenting our position.

"The building trades oppose Bill 31 in its entirety." He then goes on to analyse the various clauses and ends his letter this way:

"We have consistently demonstrated that we are willing to work with government and management to build a better Ontario." They sound like reasonable folks. "We met with your ministry for over one year in trust and in good faith. You have betrayed that trust and demonstrated bad faith. You are putting everything that is good about the construction industry in jeopardy."

I want to stop there for a second. The government keeps saying that this is so good for construction workers and it's going to be so good for decent-paying jobs and it's so good for all the people who are represented by this government, and you can't understand why they're not on side. If it did all those things, they would be on side. Their first priority — I've been there; I was an elected labour leader — the first responsibility you have, is to your membership. Their responsibility isn't to my political party or the Liberals or the PCs. God, it's certainly not the PCs. That's not where their allegiance needs to be. That's not what they were elected to do. They were elected to represent their members, just like a mayor is elected to represent her or his city. That's their priority. If they've got other priorities, they should either resign or be turfed out.

If this was good for the construction workers, at the very least, even if for political reasons, the union would stay quiet. If they didn't like you in terms of other things you've done, which they don't, but this was good for their members, it doesn't take a genius to figure out they would do as little as possible to give you political ammunition, but they wouldn't do anything to stop it from happening. If you could find one or two people who were off the mark in terms of their responsibilities, that still doesn't explain why virtually every local union that's involved in the construction industry is screaming, "Don't do this."

But you won't listen. You all look away, you work on your books, you talk to one another. You'll dutifully stand up and support this anti-democratic motion, and you'll walk out, and I suspect — I really don't know what some of you think, I'm not even going to go there.

Mr Dillon goes on to say:

"There is no aspect of Bill 31 which we can support or cooperate in. Specifically, in good conscience we will not be able to participate in any project agreement created under Bill 31."

The minister told us that this bill was meant to encourage partnerships, bring stability, bring investment. How are you going to do that when you have alienated one of the partners to the point where they're not going to sit down with you? And they're not going to sit down with the employers, because obviously the employers are

supporting this or we'd be getting copies of their faxes. Do you know what? I support them and applaud them.

At some point somebody, somewhere, has to draw a line in the sand. We all used to think that would come when the election happened, but now you're changing the rules of the election and you're not going to let anybody have anything to say about it.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): Oh, come on. Try a little accuracy.

Mr Christopherson: What is inaccurate, Minister?

You're shutting down debate on this bill and you've just tabled a motion that's shutting down debate on your changes to the election rules. What have I said that's inaccurate? She says nothing.

Mr Dillon goes on to say, "By introducing a bill that is viciously anti-union, you have decided that there will not be stability in the construction industry."

Guess what happened this morning? This government

has pointed to the situation in Samia as being sort of a flashpoint of why it was necessary, in its opinion, to bring in Bill 31. That's what they've said. They've pointed to it in every one — at least in their early speeches. I don't imagine we'll hear too much about it now. Of course there won't be any more debate, so there goes that problem for you.

What happened in Samia this morning? Five hundred skilled trades workers dropped their tools and set up in formation picket lines. You know, they're not angry with their employers, other than — I don't want to speak for them, but I suspect there's probably some concern about the fact that their employers aren't publicly saying something too. If they joined in on this, maybe then you'd have to stop and listen, but because they're being silent you get to try to isolate big union bosses, as you like to label them.

Their main problem is not their employer, it's you. You're attacking their livelihood. You're attacking their ability to have a decent standard of living. You're attacking their ability to decide whether they want a union or not. They've been left with no choice. Doesn't this sound familiar? When did we last look at a situation like that? How about 120,000 teachers? Arguably the most non-militant image in terms of —

Interjections

Mr Christopherson: They scoff and they laugh.

That's because in hindsight you finally see what teachers can do when they decide to stick together. They recognized they were next in the crosshairs of your rifle. That's what you believed. Now of course you want to write them off as being like everybody else: just more of those union types. You're running out of the population. You're starting to run out of folks, because there are a lot of teachers and a lot of other people in our communities who supported those teachers.

You can say what you want. You can cast aspersions against them all you want and try to label them as special interest all you want, but the reality is that 120,000 teachers on the streets of Ontario in protest of Ontario government legislation is both unprecedented and significant.

because it points to the polarization you're creating in this society, the kind of polarization where it's us and them. In Samia, 500 people this morning, 500 workers who otherwise, without your Bill 31 and your intent to ram it through, would have gone to work like any other day. Is it going to end there? I don't know, but I know that you can't guarantee that it won't. I think there was enough legitimacy in why they did it that you ought to be worried about it.

I travel around this province a lot, speaking to an awful lot of different people, and at some point you're just going to push too far. You're going to push too hard. You're going to show just too much arrogance, too much disdain for the average citizens and their real democratic rights; not the ones you talk about in here, the ones that you're trampling on.

I tell you, you'd have a huge problem if every single person who's been wronged by your government decided, unplaned but spontaneously, they were going to do something about this. You'd have a real problem. But as long as you're successful in pointing out that you're a bully who can win every fight, I guess there's a better chance that people won't.

Eventually bullies get payback, which is, I would think, why you've changed the election laws. You saw that coming, you were worried about it and you realized you're already tagged as being undemocratic. Why not go for it? Why stop short now? Why not go whole hog?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Nothing interferes with the democratic right to vote.

Mr Christopherson: "Nothing interferes with the democratic right to vote," says the Minister of Community and Social Services. Let me tell you, the changes you're making under what's called the Wal-Mart provision does exactly that. It does exactly that because there's a clause in Bill 31 and it disallows the ability of the board — let's have this debate, Minister — where the employer has poisoned the workplace —

Hon Mrs Ecker: Or the union.

Mr Christopherson: Or the union — I'm talking about the laws that exist, so you might want to think about what you're saying. The law as it exists now allows that if either does something that affects the ability of people to have a free vote, they can order an automatic certification, which is exactly what happened in Wal-Mart. That's not something we dreamed up. In fact, it was a Tory government that brought it in.

It's been upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada as being fair, and their rationale is that when you poison the workplace by threatening people with their jobs or the security of their jobs, you cannot guarantee a democratic outcome of the vote. The Supreme Court of Canada has supported that. Your Bill 31, Minister, is going to take that away.

Hon Mrs Ecker: No, it's not.

Mr Christopherson: Yes, it is. You don't know what you're saying, Minister. It does take it away.

That's the part you're taking out. Pretty soon they're going to say, "Majority vote rules," but the majority of people in Ontario voted against them. That's the way it turned out. I appreciate there are three parties and maybe there were four in some ridings, and there are exceptional circumstances, but then that would be my point, wouldn't it? That would be my point, that there are exceptional circumstances wherein a pure thought of "majority rules," full stop, does not always serve the best interests of democracy.

Until I see you pull up in the limo and say, "I'm done with this and I'm done with sitting on that side of the House, and I'm not going to be a minister of the crown again until I get over 50% of the vote," then I suggest that you have accepted the concept that there are times when a majority decision does not serve the best interests of democracy.

What else has the board said? The board has also said — this is in the Wal-Mart case: "This case is a classic example of a situation in which the conduct of the employer changes the question in the minds of the employees at the vote on May 9th from one of union representation to one of 'do you want to retain your employment.'" — that's the clause that you're removing; that's the one that you say is so undemocratic, the one supported by the Supreme Court of Canada — "requires us to consider whether any other remedy short of automatic certification, including the taking of a second representation vote, is sufficient to counter the effect of the employer's contraventions of the act."

That means the part where they intimidated him, which is not allowed under law. They go on to say: "We are of the view that a second representation vote in this case would be equally meaningless." That's what the Ontario Labour Relations Board has sustained since, I believe, the mid-1970s when this was introduced into law by a former Tory government.

1750

They go on to say: "The board has repeatedly recognized that threats to an employee's job security will determine the ability of the employees to freely express their views with regard to union representation. Therefore a second vote in this case is not appropriate."

You're going to remove the ability of the board to counteract the effect of the employer breaking the law. You're going to put in place financial costs, fines. That just becomes a licence fee.

This clause has also prevented a lot of employers from violating the law, because they know there's a good chance, if it can be proven they did that, then there would be an automatic certification. It allowed the board to correct the situation where the employer has broken the law, and it's an incentive for the employer not to break the law.

The board and the Supreme Court of Canada have ruled that in these kinds of instances you cannot have a free vote, that a second vote would be meaningless, and therefore the board provides automatic certification. As I've

labour practices,"

be to award an employer for its commission of unfair to the board. To conclude otherwise" — Minister — "would remedy... (certification without a vote) may be applied by wishes of the employees as a group, and the legislative their jobs — "it becomes impossible to ascertain the true intimidating people about their jobs and the security of "Once the well is poisoned in this manner" — meaning what the board said in 1994:

Mr Christopherson: It's not just me. Let's just see *interjection.*

times mean.

employer, for keeping the union out." That's what the Minister, are now going to be financial only. You know what that means? That means, "Here's your licence fee, employer, for keeping the union out." That's what the

Mr Christopherson: The remedies that are there, **Hon Mrs Ecker:** There are still remedies there, Dave. the employer denies those workers that free environment.

that currently exists allows a remedy for the board when from intimidation. They are entitled to that, and this law entitled to make a decision in an environment that's free a union, it's a very big decision for them, and they are don't get it — that when someone is thinking about joining You have to understand — some of you obviously just workplace.

they now have in law when the employer poisons the You're taking away from the board one of the remedies because I'm telling you that's exactly what you're doing, to pay attention now maybe at least to ask somebody, Community and Social Services and I would ask her, if not relates to the exchange I just had with the Minister of force because I think they're important. One of them debate, but there are a few key things that I want to reinforce our specific concerns during the second reading I have only a few remaining moments. I have already that after all this things are going to be better? Dream on.

don't even give us a say." You expect people to believe affected by your legislation have said, "Government, you Stability is a key part of that. The unions that are ment?

protests that are happening are going to bring in investment? How do you think stories like Sarnia and the other attract investment. How do you think this is going to do "You have decided that Ontario will not be open for In closing, Mr Dillon's letter says:

God help them if they don't follow it.

going to happen with all the poor, unwashed masses and sitting up there on Mount Olympus, you'll decide what's decide what's going to happen everywhere. All of you is about. There is no debate. Nobody gets a say. You You're making sure there isn't a debate. That's what this stuff. But that's what this is all about today, isn't it? love to have a debate, just an open debate on any of this I'd love to have a debate with her or any one of them. I'd was doing here because she doesn't want to have a debate. I'll save you the trouble, Speaker. I'll refocus on what I

said in the past, it's usually for a relatively short period of time, usually about a year. If it's that bad an arrangement, the employees at that time have the legal, democratic right to vote the union out, but at least the employees had an opportunity to have their democratic view expressed.

My leader, Howard Hampton, and I raised today, and I raised yesterday, the situation of one of the Premier's senior staff people, Mr. Giorio. We talked about the fact that he happened to be with the law firm that represented the TD Bank when the TD Bank tried to weasel out of their collective agreement. They had him represent them at the board and at all the court cases.

Mr Baird: He represented you when you were at the Ministry of the Attorney General.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order.

Mr Christopherson: If it will help the member for Nepean regain his composure, I would point out to him that my point in raising it is not to question how good he is or isn't or who he may or may not have worked for. I wouldn't do that. I don't know the gentleman. But I am raising the point of how interesting it is that he was part of the law firm that represented the TD Bank when they did indeed try to weasel out of their responsibilities and get rid of the union. They lost at the board and they appealed to the court a number of times over the last few years, and lost every time.

Isn't it interesting that under Bill 31 the TD Bank, after this bill is law, which will likely happen as early as Monday, can now legally tip up the collective agreement they tried to get rid of in front of the boards and courts, and the person who was one of the lawyers on the case just happens to work in the Premier's office? Isn't it further interesting that the government never, during the course of discussions with the construction trade unions, discussed the fact that they were looking at this. It came as a total shock.

I want to add, in the three minutes that are left, the fact that there were a number of other cases that had the same fate as the TD Bank and that will also benefit at the end of the day. That's what is about: Who does it benefit? Who benefits from this bill? We know it's not the workers or they wouldn't be saying and doing what they're doing. So it's got to be the employers. Who wins? Well, the Hudson's Bay Co. They're a non-construction employer. They were ruled against by the ORLB. Hicks Morley, where Mr Giorio worked, was involved in that case. The same applies to Alcan Aluminum, Kidd Creek Mines and Wal-Mart. Isn't that an interesting coincidence?

It's amazing what happens when there's a little time to look at things. But there won't be a lot more time to look at anything, because today's debate is about this government shutting down debate and the opportunity to find out what the facts are and put them on the record, and let people decide for themselves who's right and who's wrong.

As for your project agreements, the fact of the matter is that yes, there were some discussions about it. I read a letter where they were angry and they still pointed out the fact that they are prepared to work with government and

employers, as should any union that's trying to represent its members. As long as there's negotiation about really improving things, they ought to do that. But that's not what happened here. What you have tabled under project agreements bears absolutely no resemblance to anything that was talked about or that the unions had said they were prepared to consider — nothing. That's why they put it on the record that they're opposed to every part.

There's something else that needs to go on the record here too. I, like a lot of people, initially assumed that the Wal-Mart decision really would apply more to the non-construction industry and workplaces than it would to construction. But you know, I've now been apprised of the fact — I didn't work on construction sites, so I don't know these things personally. I need to be briefed on them and talk to people and learn from their experience — that on a construction site, because people are laid off all the time, sometimes a couple of times a day as they move through different sites, workers are moving around constantly. That's the nature of the work they do. It's so much easier for an employer to arrange for a layoff that looks like it has nothing to do with Bill 31, but the reality is that once those workers are laid off, they can make an application to the Ontario Labour Relations Board and the union is gone because they're not considered a construction employer. That's the significance of that clause.

In closing let me read a letter from Ken Scott, business manager of Local 586, IBEW. He says to the government: "If you and your government pass Bill 31 as a legislation, I give you my solemn promise to do everything in my power to have your collective asses bounced from office in the next election." Amen to that.

The Speaker: Mr Turnbull has moved government notice of motion number 22. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."
All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.
Call in the members; this will be a five-minute bell.
The Speaker: All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Sampson, Rob
Saunderson, William
Shea, Denwyn
Skarica, Toni
Smith, Bruce
Snobelen, John
Spinale, Joseph
Stierling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Tascona, Joseph N.
Turnbull, David
Wood, Bob
Young, Terence H.

Hastings, John
Johns, Helen
Johnson, Ron
Kells, Morley
Klees, Frank
Maves, Bart
Munro, Julia
Mushinski, Marilyn
Paladini, Al
Parker, John L.
Preston, Peter
Ross, Lillian

Amott, Ted
Baird, John R.
Beaudin, Marcel
Boushy, Dave
Brown, Jim
Carroll, Jack
Chudleigh, Ted
Clement, Tony
Ecker, Janet
Eves, Ernie L.
Ford, Douglas B.
Froese, Tom
Gilchrist, Steve
Hardeman, Ernie

The Speaker: All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles
Boyd, Manon
Christopherson, David
Colle, Mike
Conway, Sean G.
Crozier, Bruce
Kormos, Peter
Lankin, Frances
Lessard, Wayne
Marchese, Rosano
Martin, Tony
Sergio, Mano
Slipp, Tony
Wood, Len

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The
ayes are 40; the nays are 14.
The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
It now being just after 6 of the clock, this House stands
adjourned until 6:30 of the clock.
The House adjourned at 1805.
Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeu­di 18 juin 1998

AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC	
ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS	
Loi de 1998 sur une tolérance zéro en	
matière d'abus de substances,	
projet de loi 30, <i>M. Young</i>	Adoptée.....1614
QUESTIONS ORALES	
Mannuels scolaires	M. Bisson.....1624
PREMIÈRE LECTURE	
Loi de 1998 modifiant la Loi sur	
la cité de Toronto, projet de loi 44,	
<i>M^{me} Lankin</i>	Adoptée.....1629
Loi de 1998 sur la Semaine des	
victimes de crimes de violence,	
projet de loi 45, <i>M. Baird</i>	Adoptée.....1629

CONTENTS

Thursday 18 June 1998

ORAL QUESTIONS

Textbooks	1620
Mrs McLeod	1620
Mr David Johnson	1620, 1623, 1624
Mr Hampton	1623
Mr Wildman	1623
Health care reform	1621
Mr Kennedy	1621
Mrs Winner	1621
Children's health services	1622
Mr Hampton	1622
Mrs Winner	1622, 1623
Mrs Lankin	1622
Hospital restructuring	1624
Mr Kennedy	1624
Mrs Winner	1624
Labour legislation	1625
Mr Hampton	1625
Mr Eves	1625
Mr Christopherson	1625
Compensation for hepatitis C patients	1625
Mr Carroll	1625
Mrs Winner	1625, 1626
Mr Kennedy	1626
Municipal restructuring	1626
Mr Phillips	1626
Mr Leach	1626
Aircraft plant closure	1626
Mr Hampton	1626
Mr Palladini	1627
Municipal legislation	1627
Mr Sheehan	1627
Mr Leach	1627
Cancer treatment	1628
Mr Bartolucci	1628
Mrs Winner	1628
Upperwash Provincial Park	1628
Mr Kormos	1628
Mr Harnick	1628
FIRST READINGS	
City of Toronto Amendment Act,	1998, Bill 44, Ms Lankin
Agreed to	1629
Ms Lankin	1629
Victims of Violent Crime Week Act,	1998, Bill 45, Mr Baird
Agreed to	1629

PETITIONS

Hospital restructuring	1629
Mr Kennedy	1629
Compensation for hepatitis C patients	1629
Mr Tascona	1629
Alternative fuels	1630
Mr Carroll	1630
Health care	1630
Mr Sergio	1630
Mr O'Toole	1630
Bottle recycling	1630
Mrs Elliott	1630
Electoral reform	1630
Mr Bradley	1630
Mr Crozier	1631
Protection for health care workers	1631
Mr Sergio	1631
Mr Arnott	1631
Mr Gilchrist	1631
Rent regulation	1632
Mr Bradley	1632
Young offenders	1632
Mr Hastings	1632
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS	
Time allocation, government notice of	1633
Mr Turnbull	1633
Mr Maves	1633
Mr Klees	1635
Mr O'Toole	1637
Mr Bradley	1640
Mr Crozier	1643
Mr Collie	1645
Mr Christopherson	1647
Agreed to	1653
OTHER BUSINESS	
Correction	1617
Ms Lankin	1617
Member's privilege	1617
Mrs Elliott	1617
United Empire Loyalists' Day	1618
Mr Danford	1618
Mr Conway	1618
Mr Wildman	1619
Presentation of petitions	1632
Mr Gilchrist	1632
The Deputy Speaker	1632
Mr Sergio	1633

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

All-terrain vehicles, private members' notice of motion number 14,	1599, 1606
Mr Stewart	1600
Mr Crozier	1601
Mr Wildman	1602
Mr O'Toole	1602
Mr Phillips	1602
Mr Bisson	1603
Mr Fox	1604
Mr Galt	1605
Agreed to	1614
Zero Tolerance for Substance Abuse Act, 1998,	1606, 1614
Mr Young	1607
Mr Agostino	1608
Mr Bisson	1610
Mr Smith	1610
Mr Caplan	1610
Mr Klees	1611
Ms Churley	1612
Mr Hastings	1613
Agreed to	1614
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	
Emery school council	1614
Mr Sergio	1614
Physician shortage	1615
Mr Len Wood	1615
Fiesta Week	1615
Mr Ouellette	1615
Child prostitution	1615
Mr Bartolucci	1615
Education funding	1615
Mr Wildman	1615
Amniotic lateral sclerosis	1616
Mr Tilson	1616
Gambling	1616
Mr Bradley	1616
Pauline Junior School playground	1616
Mr Silipo	1617
Kelley Advertising	1617
Mr Skatca	1617
Drowning deaths	1617
Mr North	1617

CABQ
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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 18 June 1998

Jeudi 18 juin 1998



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Thursday 18 June 1998

The House met at 1832.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENERGY COMPETITION ACT, 1998
LOI DE 1998 SUR LA CONCURRENCE
DANS LE SECTEUR DE L'ÉNERGIE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 35, An Act to create jobs and protect consumers by promoting low-cost energy through competition, to protect the environment, to provide for pensions and to make related amendments to certain Acts / Projet de loi visant à créer des emplois et à protéger les consommateurs en favorisant le bas prix de l'énergie au moyen de la concurrence, protégeant l'environnement, traitant de pensions et apportant des modifications connexes à certaines lois.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Do we have a quorum for this important —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is a quorum present, please?

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): A quorum is not present, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker ordered the bells rung.
Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Member for Windsor-Riverside.
Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to ensure there is a quorum here to listen to this most important debate about Bill 35, the bill to break up Ontario Hydro.

When I left off yesterday, I was talking about some of the problems that Ontario Hydro has experienced that have led us to the introduction of Bill 35, a bill that is this government's approach to try and deal with some of the problems Hydro has had since it was first established almost 100 years ago.

The biggest problem that Ontario Hydro has experienced and is experiencing is incredible amounts of debt. We know that tens of billions of dollars in debt now inhibit Ontario Hydro's ability to be as competitive as they really should be. We know as well how much of that debt was accumulated. It was through sloppiness, mistakes, mismanagement and political interference.

When I talk about political interference, I'm talking about the decision to build Darlington. Darlington was one of the single biggest contributors to the amount of debt that Ontario Hydro has right now, and I seem to recall that was a project that was undertaken by a Progressive Conservative government back in the 1970s. It started out as a \$3-billion project and ended up as a \$14-billion project, and this is a government that likes to pride itself on its ability to be good fiscal managers. They let this go completely out of control, and because of that there are a lot of us who are afraid that we're going to end up being stuck with the bill.

New Democrats have been consistent in their opposition to the nuclear power strategy. One of the things that concerns me about Bill 35 is that it still considers nuclear power to be a clean power option, something we should perhaps continue to pursue as a means of producing power here in Ontario.

This bill does nothing to address our concerns about nuclear power generation in Ontario; in fact, it enhances them. We are concerned that nuclear power plants may end up in the private sector. We're concerned about the privatization of the nuclear power industry in Ontario, and I think the public is concerned about that as well.

The stranded debt problem — "stranded debt" is a term that is defined in Bill 35 — is something that I think brings home to all of us that Sir Adam Beck's vision of power at cost has simply gone astray. Something went horribly wrong with the vision of Adam Beck that we should be able to get power at cost here in Ontario, because if we were paying the cost of the generation of hydro in Ontario, we wouldn't have that huge stranded debt problem that we have right now.

New Democrats agree that there needs to be change. We agree as well that there needs to be competition in the hydro sector. When the NDP was in government, we opened the doors to competition. We had a non-utility generator established in the city of Windsor, TransAlta. We had a power plant that provided power to the Chrysler minivan plant. The member for Cochrane North reminds us that in Spruce Falls there was a public sector-private sector partnership to engage in hydro-electric generation, a project we were very proud of because it ensured that the Spruce Falls pulp and paper mill was able to continue in business, thanks to the intervention of the New Democratic government at the time.

The problem is that we're stuck with this stranded debt right now. What we really need to know is who is going to determine what the stranded debt is, how is it going to be

They also hold out the promise that the stranded debt is going to be paid over a reasonable length of time, that paying off these billions of dollars of stranded debt is going to be a painless exercise. They also promise that there's going to be better environmental protection, that by opening up the hydro market we're going to have cleaner air and cleaner water.

They're also saying that Ontario Hydro won't be privatized. I know there are a lot of members of the public, a lot of consumers who really aren't too crazy about the idea of the privatization of what was traditionally a very well respected public monopoly in Ontario. They also want to lead the workers at Ontario Hydro to the belief that there are not going to be any job losses as well. That is what they say. That's what they've said. I'm sure we're going to continue to hear the rhetoric throughout this debate this evening and into next week and maybe into the summertime. If we're not able to get through this bill, we may be sitting in July. Who knows?

This is what it really says in the bill: It breaks up Ontario Hydro, it deregulates Ontario Hydro and it brings in Bill 35 whatsoever for consumers that rates are going to go down.

The promise with respect to a cleaner environment is only as good as this government's commitment to the environment. You'll recall that last night I spoke extensively about this government's sorry record with respect to environmental protection, a record that has been the highlight of the Environmental Commissioner's report, one that I know this government isn't proud of.

It also doesn't say how the stranded debt is going to be dealt with. My fear is that the stranded debt is going to be socialized, that future profits are going to be privatized, that big business and big investors are going to benefit; they're going to get the shaft. That is what I fear is going to happen. You know what? It doesn't need to be this way.

To talk specifically about the stranded debt, part V of the act sets up the Ontario Hydro Financial Corp. This is a non-share capital corporation, and its purpose is to manage and extinguish the existing guaranteed debt of Ontario Hydro. How are they going to do that? They're going to receive various revenue streams from different sources. There's also in part V of the bill the imposition of a competition transition charge on any person who generates or consumes electricity. So consumers are definitely going to be paying for part of the stranded debt. This charge is only going to take effect after a date that's prescribed by the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance has a whole lot of authority to make decisions in this legislation. The competition transition charge, if imposed, is going to be paid to the Financial Corp to reduce the stranded debt and will be terminated at a time when the stranded debt is paid off.

determined and when are we going to know what that amount is. How many billions of dollars is it? How much are we going to have to pay for the mistakes of previous Tory and Liberal governments in pursuing the construction of the Darlington nuclear plant and other nuclear plants in Ontario? We see how many billions of dollars we're being saddled with because of those previous governments' mistakes. That outlines some of the problems they've had with Ontario Hydro that this government feels it needs to bring in Bill 35 to address. This is the Progressive Conservative government's approach to dealing with the problems of Ontario Hydro and we acknowledge that there are some problems.

1840

What I want to say to the people who are watching — because I'm not sure the members in the government are really paying a whole lot of attention to what I have to say — is that if you like what Mike Harris did for health care in Ontario, if you like what Mike Harris did to public education in Ontario, you're going to love what Mike Harris is going to do to Ontario Hydro. I can see that there are some members of the government who obviously approve of —

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North): That's inflammatory. It's not out of order to be inflammatory.

Mr Lessard: I'm glad we've been able to enlighten the debate with respect to Bill 35. I was afraid that when we were talking about a bill like this, as important as it is, that it may get a tad boring. But I'm glad that people are interested enough that I've been able to get the response that I had.

What I was saying, and I know the members of the government agree — they like what Mike Harris has done for health care and education in Ontario — but people in Windsor-Riverside and people in Cochrane North and people in many parts of Ontario are not really too crazy about what Mike Harris has done to health care and education. Like other parts of the Tory agenda — the Common Sense Revolution comes to mind, the phoney tax scheme comes to mind as well — the spin doctors and the whiz kids in the corner office have dressed up this Bill 35 with a whole lot of fancy packaging, fancy lines to try and sell the public on what it is that they're trying to do with respect to Ontario Hydro, trying to get the public to buy into what they're doing.

This is how they've done it. They're saying to the public that the system is broken and that it needs to be fixed. That's something that sounds pretty good. They are also promising that hydro consumers are going to get a big break on their bill. Hydro rates are going to go down. The bills are going to get lower. Who wouldn't like that? That would sound good. I happen to be a hydro consumer myself, so I'd be happy if my bills went down.

The other thing they promise — they're offering consumers more choice as well. They say to people, "Maybe you'll be able to make arrangements to buy power from the distributor of your choice and therefore you'll be able to negotiate lower rates, and that sounds pretty good too.

The stranded debt, for those who have a difficult time understanding exactly what that is, is defined in the legislation — it's actually a defined term — in section 79. "Stranded debt" means the amount of the debts and other liabilities of the Financial Corp that, in the opinion of the Minister of Finance, cannot reasonably be serviced and retired in a competitive electricity market."

You might ask yourself what the heck that means. First of all, we have to know what is considered to be a competitive electricity market, because that isn't something we've had here in Ontario, and it's going to take a little bit of guesswork, I assume.

Last night, the Minister of Energy in his speech basically said that he is going to come out with a discussion paper next month some time that indicates how the stranded debt is going to be figured out — he's not going to tell us what it is; he's just going to tell us how he'll be able to figure it out — and that some time in 1999 — which is a bit of a coincidence, because I think the Premier has said there might be an election in 1999.

We're being asked to pass Bill 35, a bill for which the promises that have been made by this government are solely dependent upon the determination of what the stranded debt actually is. They're asking us to accept these promises based on the assurance that their estimation of what the stranded debt is going to be some time in the future is going to result in all of these benefits being achieved. I have a difficult time swallowing that.

Part of the reason is that right now we don't know anything about how much that debt might be. There have been some estimates that it may be \$15 billion. Mr Farlinger from Ontario Hydro says that it could be as much as \$20 billion or \$30 billion. We don't know anything about what it might be. We don't know whether it's going to take into account the decommissioning costs for nuclear power stations or disposing of the waste from nuclear power stations. These are issues that the government is going to have to deal with in determining what the stranded debt actually is.

This is something that is going to have to be estimated. Depending on how the estimate comes out, it's either people who are the consumers of hydro who are going to pay that debt or it's going to get stuck on taxpayers. Those are the two choices: that consumers pay or taxpayers pay. There's no other option out there. If the government over-estimates the stranded debt, and therefore takes too much off the books of Ontario Hydro, then Ontario Hydro will have a big advantage over other competitors. That will mean that other competitors aren't going to move into the Ontario market, and because of that, consumers aren't going to benefit from lower rates either. On the other hand, if Ontario Hydro is saddled with too much debt, then they're not going to be competitive and they're likely to fail.

I hope the government members and the people who are viewing can imagine a situation where Ontario Hydro might be subject to failure, or its successor companies, based on Bill 35. It's a scary thought. If Ontario Hydro

fails, they no longer have the capacity to service that outstanding debt. What happens to it? We, as taxpayers, are going to end up paying those bills. If the choice is pay towards that stranded debt. So it doesn't matter how big a consumer you are, you're going to end up paying it. If you are a taxpayer, though, and get stuck with this bill, you are going to pay it whether or not you consume electricity; and it doesn't matter how much electricity you consume, if you're a taxpayer, you're going to end up paying the bill.

What I fear is that because of the way this is set up in Bill 35, there is going to be an opportunity, a loophole, for large consumers of electricity in Ontario to avoid having to pay their share of the stranded debt. You know what happens if those large consumers aren't paying their share of the stranded debt? People like you and I are going to get stuck with it. That's not a prospect that I am really looking forward to.

The other concern I have is that if Ontario Hydro turns out not to be competitive, there is going to be the serious threat that the only way to deal with that is to sell it off, to privatize it. This government says that's not their intention, they're not talking about privatization. They say, "Even if we were going to talk about it, it's not for five years down the road." But, as I've indicated, this bill does not provide any iron-clad guarantees that privatization isn't just over the horizon for this government.

One of the reasons I'm concerned about this, not only because of the guesswork that's involved in the stranded debt and what might happen if in fact they're wrong, is one of the steps that this government has taken by appointing Sir Graham Day to the Hydro board of directors. "Who is Sir Graham Day?" you might ask. He was what we like to call a serial privatizer. He was involved in Great Britain with some of the biggest privatizations that ever took place in Great Britain. He was involved in a company called PowerGen. He privatized that company and the share prices went up by 218% during the time he was there. The company's operating profit per unit of electricity doubled at the same time and the effect that had was to make a whole lot of people rich.

I think there are a lot of big investors who are salivating at the opportunities they see with respect to the breakup of Ontario Hydro, and bringing Sir Graham Day on to the board of directors at Ontario Hydro really gives us an indication of the direction this government is going. What the privatization of PowerGen in the United Kingdom did was really take the British government to the cleaners. There were a lot of people who earned big profits from the sale of public assets. That's not something that I want to see here in Ontario. I want to be assured that Mike Harris is not going to sell Ontario Hydro assets at fire sale prices. We need to have some assurance that is not going to happen.

I've been reading a little bit about British Energy, another company from Great Britain, and they're actually involved. They're negotiating in the background somewhere, trying to move into the Ontario energy market.

This is an interesting article that was in the Toronto Star on May 20 of this year. It starts out by saying, "The latest moves by British Energy PLC, the nuclear company, show that your physics teacher was right — power abhors a vacuum."

"They're seeing this opening in Ontario Hydro and they want to move in and fill it. All of those who deny that British Energy is not actually negotiating for the purchase of nuclear power plants, I think they might be living in a vacuum. I have no doubt that this is actually happening, notwithstanding that denial. The fact is that British Energy's vision is out there, it's being discussed. It's not just a vision; they have 15 people who are working in an office here in Toronto. This is something they are actively working on. They of course don't think Hydro is going to be privatized lock, stock and barrel; it's not going to be sold for fire sale prices."

I know the member for Huron is quite concerned and doesn't believe that this could possibly happen. It probably is not going to just be sold out completely, but there is room for people like British Energy to move in and scoop up pieces of Ontario Hydro and I'm sure they expect they're going to get a good deal when they do it. Whether that's going to happen or not is something that only Mike Harris and the whiz kids in the corner office have any idea is going to happen.

"This government has the power to define the terms of this discussion, the discussion about how companies like British Energy are going to move into the Ontario market, but they're not talking about that discussion. They're not putting in place parameters for that discussion. All they're doing is just giving us their vague denial that this isn't something they're thinking about and, if they do, they're not going to think about it for five years. But the fact is that these companies are in Ontario, they're going to continue to come here, they're going to be sending their lobbyists, they're going to be attending the committee hearings, they're going to be coming to meet with members of the Legislature and bureaucrats at the Ministry of Energy, trying to see where they can get a piece of the Ontario Hydro business."

I believe that we as legislators have an obligation to ensure that the discussions that may be taking place about the potential privatization of Ontario Hydro have some parameters. I don't think we should be talking about the privatization of Ontario Hydro, but if that's something Mike Harris is talking about, if that's a road that he is leading us towards, then it is his responsibility to ensure that he lays that on the table and that people understand that's what he's doing, and he puts some limits on those discussions.

Last night when I was speaking, I was talking about the concerns I have for consumers in Ontario. That's really the biggest group out there that we need to be concerned about. This government likes to talk big about how "You guys only cater to special-interest groups." I have no apology for that, because the special-interest group that I'm concerned about in this case is consumers of electricity in the province. If you want to consider them to be a special-interest group, so be it. I want to look out for their interests before I want to be looking out for the interests of big money like British Energy and big investors on Wall Street and Bay Street who are salivating at the opportunities to move in and gobble up huge parts of the Ontario Hydro traditional public monopoly and benefit from it for their own shareholders.

The bill says that there may be some protection from unscrupulous gas and electricity brokers. That's something new that they're putting in this bill, that gas brokers are going to be regulated in addition to electricity brokers. They say there will be more freedom of choice, but we know what happened when the gas broker business opened up: There were all kinds of fly-by-night brokers that entered into the market, went door to door, took advantage of seniors and those who were vulnerable and said: "We're going to give you cheap gas. Just sign right here. See you later." A lot of those companies disappeared. People lost their money. A lot of people thought they were going to get lower gas rates, but hey, guess what? When the bills started to come in, they couldn't believe they were being charged a lot more than Union Gas would charge. They were being gouged, and this government was letting them do it.

We also saw recently, with the deregulation of Union Gas, that the cost to rent a hot water tank may go up by 44% for up to 875,000 gas water heater rental customers in the province. That's not bad enough, but there's up to 90,000 people, mostly in northern areas of the province, probably in Cochrane North and other places, who are not going to be able to rent a gas hot water heater at all. They're going to be cut off completely. That's what happens with the deregulation of the industry. We need to make sure that doesn't happen as a result of the passage of Bill 35. We want to make sure that there aren't fly-by-night electricity brokers out there doing the same thing.

I just want to let people who are watching tonight know that you can't buy electricity from anybody who shows up at your door yet. This isn't in effect now, and even if somebody comes and tries to sell it to you, you can't buy it.

Mrs Helen Johns (Huron): It's illegal to sell it.

Mr Lessard: The member for Huron says it's illegal to sell it, but that never stops people from trying to make a few bucks from seniors in this province if they think they can get away with it.

In section 56 of the bill it says that in order to sell in the province of Ontario you have to have a licence, and there are some conditions that have to be in that licence as well. It says in section 69 some of the conditions that may be included in a licence. Specifically, it says in clause 69(2)(i) that you may have to specify information about the emissions caused by the generation of electricity, and that gets back to how effective this government's environmental protection agenda is. The problem is that it says you "may" have to comply with these sorts of conditions. It also says that they "may" put conditions in the licence

that there be minimum and maximum prices, so there's no assurance that prices are going to be regulated at all.

There is one provision that says every licence shall be deemed to contain a condition. I'll let you know what the condition is. It says, "that the licensee comply with the market rules that apply to that licensee." Market rules are defined in section 55. It says, "market rules" means the rules made under section 30 of the Electricity Act." So you look at section 30 of the Electricity Act to see what that has to say. It says — you've got to bear with me here for a minute.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Actually, you don't have a minute.

Mr Lessard: You're right, I don't have a minute. It says that market rules may include those that are determined basically by regulation. So we don't have any idea what the market rules are.

That really outlines some of the concerns I have about this bill. I have serious concerns about protection of the environment, protection of the interests of consumers and how the stranded debt is going to be determined. I await being convinced, but I have serious reservations about supporting this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Joseph N. Tascona): Questions or comments?

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): It's a pleasure to rise and speak a little bit in response to the member opposite and speak a little bit in response to the member opposite. My riding is an interesting one because the Sir Adam Beck plants were originally built there. A long time ago, we had a lot of abrasive companies and chemical companies come to Niagara Falls because of proximity to abundant, reliable and cheap power. Over the years the two governments opposite were in office, the cost of power in this province went up so much that we lost a lot of those businesses. Ohio Brass and Treibacher are gone, Cyanamid is gone, all kinds of very good union, high-paying jobs are gone because the members opposite didn't have the backbone to take control of Ontario Hydro and keep rates down.

There was a time in this province when a monopoly was the right way to organize the hydro industry. When we were building massive power plants, when we needed to build transmission lines all across this province, it was understandable that a monopoly could be used for that. But everyone knows that the most inefficient economic system there for consumers is a monopoly. The NDP is completely out of touch with everyone on this, including the Power Workers' Union. Everyone in this province understands that we have to break up this monopoly and we have to move to a competitive system. It's the only way we're going to attract some of those industries back to my constituency, back to Niagara, back to Ontario, and bring some of those jobs back. Everyone understands this.

We've gone through all kinds of studies, we've had the Macdonald commission, we had another report after that, and then we had a bill. It's time to move forward. The NDP wants to continue to move backwards. Even the

Power Workers' Union doesn't want to follow their lead any more.

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): I think the member for Windsor-Riverside made some very salient points in terms of the potential impact this bill might have on consumers. One of the things he referred to which has been of great concern to many citizens across Ontario is what happens if you deregulate in terms of people who enter the field. We've had natural gas deregulation over the last couple years. We've had all kinds of fly-by-night brokers trying to peddle so-called contracts for natural gas. There's even a report in the London Free Press about people already going door to door, seeing if they can hustle some kind of contract for electricity. I just hope, as the member for Windsor-Riverside said, that there's some way of protecting consumers as we go through this massive transition in Hydro. There is agreement that there have to be some changes. There are some serious concerns, especially when you've got a debt of possibly \$32 billion that's going to be dumped on the taxpayers, and that's got to be delineated.

The 42 years of Tory reign helped set up a lot of this debt that we have. I hope they will repent and admit their sins over those 42 years when they let Hydro become an unwieldy monster. This government loves things that are big. They love big government and they love big power brokers, so I hope they stop and protect the little consumer. The big guys don't need the protections, it's the little guys we're worried about.

Mr Len Wood: I want to congratulate and thank our member for Windsor-Riverside, Wayne Lessard, for doing the leadoff for the NDP caucus on this massive Bill 35, which opens up far more questions than answers. You've got a bill that has 160 pages, and here we are on a Thursday night, debating second reading late into the night. I want to congratulate the member for Windsor-Riverside for explaining and for asking some of the questions we haven't got answers for. Is this privatization through the back door? It's possible that it is, because we don't have the answers.

Right now the government is saying that we don't know what the stranded debt is going to be. We're going to go out and get a busload of financial whizzes and we're going to bring them under Ernie Eves's financial department to try to figure out what the stranded debt is going to be. You bring in a bill like this and debate it late into the night and you don't answer the questions our member for Windsor-Riverside is asking. It opens up 160 pages of questions that are not answered now and maybe never will be answered. But we know that under the old Progressive Conservative Party, the debt of Ontario Hydro was allowed to get out of control.

You talk about when Bill Davis was Premier. He said, "We're going to build Darlington for \$4 billion." It ended up that David Peterson said, "We'll approve it right up to \$14 billion." When the NDP got elected, that was the bill, between \$14 billion and \$15 billion for building a nuclear power station that was not needed. Darlington was not

stranded debt is going to be dealt with. The member for Huron talked about that. I'd like to know how much it's going to be. I'd like to know why it is that we are going to be expected to pass Bill 35, the success or failure of which is entirely dependent upon the stranded debt, when we don't know how much it is, when we're going to find out how much it is and why it is that we're expected to try and accept this bill without knowing that.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

pleased to speak on Bill 35, and I think it's important to know what the title of this bill is as we enter this debate. It's An Act to create jobs and protect consumers by promoting low-cost energy through competition, to protect the environment, to provide for pensions and to make related amendments to certain Acts.

This bill, as introduced by the Honourable Jim Wilson, Minister of Energy, Science and Technology, is a bill that is long overdue. I'm going to speak on two parts: municipal electrical utilities and the Ontario Energy Board's regulatory role.

With respect to the municipal electrical utilities, a competitive market would provide customers with greater choices and more services, and will offer some real opportunities to municipal utilities to do things in new ways. First of all, utilities will have to decide what business models to use. They will have to decide what business models to use. They will have to decide what business models to use.

clear business mandates consistent with the Ontario Business Corporations Act. Utilities would be responsible for separating their competitive businesses from their monopoly wires business. Passage of the Energy Competition Act would allow utilities to operate on a commercial

many operational business activities and expenditures. I can tell you that in my riding of Simcoe Centre, we have the Barrie PUC, we have the Bradford-Gwillimbury

PUC, we have Innisfil Hydro. They're all very well run municipal electrical utilities, but they're looking for ways to increase their ability to operate and become more competitive and looking at economies of scale, so they welcome this legislation.

1920

In an open market, electricity companies need commercial flexibility to compete. The current regulatory relationship with Hydro would be replaced with a more streamlined, efficient accountability mechanism, one that

is more responsive to the needs of their shareholders, which is the customer.

unregulated part of their business. Shareholders and municipalities would also be able to oversee the utilities in

Mrs Johns: I'd like to remind the members opposite during the late 1970s and 1980s under Bill Davis, of the problems that happened over 42 years, especially we're here and Mike Harris is trying to correct the record needed. What a waste of money spent over the years. Now

that the member who spoke was not on the select committee, but I think the people at home recognize that Hydro has been mismanaged for the last 10 or 15 years. All parties say that it has been mismanaged and no one party is at fault here. It is in some ways unfortunate that Mr. [unclear] has been mismanaged very clearly.

Maureen Strong, what happened was that a number of people from Bruce were let go who were really needed. In the time of your government-appointed chairman, Maureen Strong, what happened was that a number of people from Bruce were let go who were really needed. In the time of your government-appointed chairman, Maureen Strong, what happened was that a number of people from Bruce were let go who were really needed.

When the member talks about the stranded debt, I think it's also important for the people at home to recognize that the debt is there today. We ratepayers are saying for that this government is moving forward to do that.

debt today. Ontario Hydro pays back approximately \$600 million every year, and will for the next three years, to pay that debt down. That same money will be going to pay off the stranded debt and it will be going to help reduce this burden that's hung around the taxpayers' necks.

I'd also like to say that the Liberal member should recognize that his party is in favour of this bill and he should find out from his own members why they're in favour of this bill. There are very good things about this. Consumers are going to be protected. Marketers are going to be licensed both on the electricity side and on the gas side.

could have developed and they didn't. The Acting Speaker (Mr Marcel Walckeville, Response, the member for Windsor-Walkerville. Mr L. Essard, I want to thank the members for Niagara

Falls, Oakwood, Cochrane North and Huron for their comments with respect to my remarks.

The member for Niagara Falls said that the price of power has gone up, and that's true, it has gone up, but the debt has continued to go up as well. So what's he saying?

That the price of power should have been lower and the debt been higher? I don't understand what he's trying to say. He says previous governments didn't have the backbone to deal with Ontario Hydro, and that may be true. It starts back with Bill Davis and way before him when they

decided that they were going to build the Darlington nuclear power plant and saddle us with a debt of over \$14 billion. It was one of the biggest boondoggles the Tory government has ever been involved in. It's a legacy that they cannot avoid having to deal with.

to try and deal with it is that it doesn't make any sense to break up Ontario Hydro unless we can be assured that the rates are going to go down. None of this makes any sense if that doesn't happen.

stranded debt, and that's really the key here, how that

the same manner as they would independent companies, which ensures a level playing field for new investment. The act provides all municipal utilities with business flexibility and a structure that invites public-private partnerships and joint ventures. The intent of the proposed reforms is to make MBLs more businesslike and efficient in providing services to their local communities.

New commercial powers and responsibilities would mean that all municipal utilities would enjoy a greater degree of autonomy than before. At the same time, the municipal council is the shareholder of the new corporations with the flexibility to choose their own corporate governance structures and accountability relationships. This approach would best meet local needs and circumstances.

As a former municipal councillor, I welcome those changes. I think they're long overdue.

Efficiencies can be realized through the proposed reforms to the municipal distribution system. Studies undertaken suggest potential economies by as much as 20%. For example, a study by the Municipal Electrical Association and Ontario Hydro estimated potential savings in controllable distribution costs of 8.5% through savings in billing, collection and administration and adoption of best practices.

Other countries have estimated potential efficiencies of restructuring. Real distribution costs per customer in New Zealand fell by almost 20% between 1989 and 1994 as a result of restructuring. Another study estimated that Norway's distribution system could realize 25% savings.

Under the proposed legislation, municipal utilities would have more purchasing options than they have today. The smaller utilities which have limited purchasing power would have a number of options. They could get together to form a power purchasing cooperative. They could form alliances with larger utilities to purchase power for them. They could sign up with a power marketer, such as Enron, or a generator, such as Ontario Hydro's successor generation company, or they could purchase directly from the spot market administered by the Independent Electricity Market Operator, also known as IMO, assuring that they get the hourly competitive price.

Under current legislation, municipal utilities are not free to merge with other utilities outside their municipal boundaries. I've heard from my constituents in Simcoe Centre that they would like to be able to look at this option. The government's proposed legislation would remove legislated barriers to local restructuring and permit utilities to merge immediately and beyond their boundaries, if that is in the customer's best interest. That's the fundamental point: These local MBLs will be looking after the customers' interests.

Under proposed legislation, there is a default supply provision. All customers will continue to have access to electricity at market-based prices through their current supplier. Customers who leave for the market can return to their original distributor. However, the Ontario Energy Board would have the authority to exempt distributors from this obligation, provided it is satisfied there is

sufficient competition among retailers and that consumers in that area would continue to have access to electricity. Distributors will still have the right to discontinue customers whose payments are in arrears, but reasonable notice to consumers would be required.

Bill 35 would continue the current rate protection for rural and remote electricity customers and would ensure that distribution companies continue to connect and serve their customers. Consumers within Ontario's electricity system would continue to contribute to this program. With the approval of this bill, the new Ontario Energy Board would be responsible for regulating the wire tariffs and could assist in limiting rate differentials. In anticipation of amalgamations at the local distribution level, the government could extend eligibility to other low-density customers or areas of the province. With the passage of this bill, the stage will be set for municipal electrical utilities to conduct business in new ways, to explore new business opportunities while ensuring safe and reliable energy supplies at the lowest possible cost to their customers.

At this time, I would like to speak about the Ontario Energy Board's regulatory role, as will be set up through the Energy Competition Act under Bill 35. Their new role is this: In a competitive electricity marketplace, it is proposed that the Ontario Energy Board, also called the OEB, would be the independent regulator for the electricity sector and continue to be the independent regulator for the natural gas sector with an expanded mandate. Bill 35 would strengthen the OEB's role in order to better protect electricity and gas consumers and to ensure that efficiencies achieved in the monopoly parts of the industry benefit all customers.

The board's role would be the following: to protect consumer's interests regarding prices, reliability and quality of electricity service; to facilitate a smooth transition to competition; to provide non-discriminatory access to Ontario's transmission and distribution systems; to facilitate energy efficiency and the use of cleaner, more environmentally benign energy sources; to promote economic efficiency in electricity generation, transmission and distribution; and finally, to facilitate the maintenance of a financially viable electricity supply industry. The new legislation proposes that the Ontario Energy Board regulate tariffs for the remaining monopoly parts of the electricity system. The transmission and distribution of wires would be regulated in a manner similar to the current regulation of natural gas.

The other component, or I should say the other role, that the Ontario Energy Board has is with regard to licensing. Under the proposed rules, all transmitters, distributors, generators, purchasers and retailers of electricity wishing to participate in the new market would require a license from the Ontario Energy Board to operate. This includes marketers selling electricity or natural gas to residential consumers. This is a significant protection to the consumers in this area. The draft legislation provides for the government to set out general or specific conditions which the Ontario Energy Board would require in licences for electricity transmitters, distributors and retailers.

criteria. The other responsibilities of the Ontario Energy Board include the following:

In addition to its licensing and rate-setting functions, the Ontario Energy Board would also review and approve proposals for the acquisition of transmission and distribution systems and for the acquisition of generation facilities by electricity transmitters and distributors to ensure that such purchases don't adversely affect market competition. That's a very fundamental change in addition to its licensing and rate-setting functions: the power to review and approve proposals for the acquisition of transmission and distribution systems and for the acquisition of generation facilities by electricity transmitters and distributors to ensure that such purchases don't adversely affect market competition — a very fundamental role for the Ontario Energy Board.

The Ontario Energy Board would also have broader powers to set and enforce codes of conduct relating to the businesses of utilities and marketers selling gas to residential consumers. Those are significant protections for the Ontario Energy Board.

The Ontario Energy Board would ensure that the distribution companies fulfil their obligations to connect and serve their consumers.

The focus of this act is certainly to provide protection for consumers by providing and promoting low-cost energy through competition. That's the fundamental theme of this Bill 35, and it's also fundamental that it is looking to promote fairness and competitiveness. The Ontario Energy Board would also monitor electricity sector markets and report its findings to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology.

In closing, I'm very pleased to have been able to speak on Bill 35 in two fundamental areas. I spoke about municipal electrical utilities, MEUs. This is a very fundamental change. I know from my riding that the public utility commissions were looking for these changes to ensure that they can compete, that they can expand their operations, and to operate fundamentally in a freer market, and they welcome these changes. I would also say that we were after a lot of consultation with the Municipal Electrical Association through this process.

Finally, I've had the privilege of speaking about the new role with respect to the Ontario Energy Board, their regulatory role with respect to the issuing of licences, the setting of rates, but also fundamentally protecting consumers in this fundamental change with respect to dealing with energy competition.

I'm very pleased to have spoken on Bill 35 and I fully support it.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I am glad to comment on the presentation by the member. I have to say that he has touched on a number of places where the essential points of the bill address the main issues, and that is, how ultimately the changes will affect the consumers, the tax-

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protection, provided they continue to meet eligibility criteria.

payers out there. Just a few comments, because the bill is

long and it's very complex as well.

The member has been addressing the regulation aspects and

also the open door to privatization, which I have to say

has not been touched. It is one of the concerns we have

expressed in this House — and I think the members of the

government know that as well — and that some of the

outside agencies, individuals or groups as well have

expressed with respect to privatization once Hydro is

totally divided. The two major portions of this division

include the commercialization, the selling, the retailer and

the supply of the power itself. So there are those concerns

in the bill and, as the member correctly didn't mention

those issues, we see them as being unaddressed in the bill,

especially when it comes to the environmental issue.

I don't have to tell you the record of this government

when it comes to environmental issues. If the government

cannot take care of environmental issues now that it's a

government, how will a private enterprise, without any

control, without any direction or legislation from this

government, address that very important environmental

aspect? So this is one of the areas where we do have a

concern.

1940

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): No matter how

you cut it or how you present it or how you say it, this bill,

for all intents and purposes, is the beginning of that slip-

pery slope — I know the folks across the way don't like us

to use that term; they figure we use it too often, but you've

got to call it what it is — towards the privatization of

Ontario Hydro.

I think anybody who knows the history of Ontario

Hydro knows why Ontario Hydro was developed in the

first place, although it has developed some significant

difficulties along the way, not the least among them a

decision by a previous Conservative government, sup-

ported by a Liberal government, to build a huge nuclear

energy plant that has cost us mega-dollars over the last

number of years and now has us in a place where we're up

to our eyeballs in debt.

The only solution the government of today can come to

in order to resolve that very difficult problem is to have off

those parts of this corporation that will generate profit and

eventually put them out there to the private sector so that

the friends and benefactors of the Tory government can

make all the dollars that come with that kind of activity,

and to socialize the debt, turn the debt back on to the

shoulders of the taxpayers, the energy consumers of

Ontario.

I just have to tell you that unless you come up with

something better, something more substantial, this just

isn't going to cut it with our caucus, and at the end of the

day, although we're going to listen to the debate in this

House and hopefully hear something beyond what we've

just heard as to why we should be willing to support this

support it.

On the other hand I have to ask, what is really going to happen to Ontario Hydro retail? There is that vast expanse, the old Huron-Ottawa tract, that belt of mid-northern Ontario. Who's going to want to be the supplier and the distributor out in the most rural reaches of Muskoka, north Hastings, north Addington, southwest Renfrew, southeast Nipissing? There's a lot of moose pasture and there's not a great population density. I don't expect the market is going to line up to offer us a lot of people who are going to want to get into that business. It's going to be a challenge, I think it's one we can probably meet, but there are one million people served by Ontario Hydro retail, many of them in very rural environments.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I want to commend the member for Simcoe Centre. I thought he made a very good speech. His references to the opportunities for efficiencies and savings in the distribution end, a point to which the last speaker, the member for Niagara Falls, made reference, is a good one. I do believe there is going to be an opportunity, particularly in places like Metropolitan Toronto, that is, the greater Toronto area, to make significant savings on the distribution account. That has to be recognized. It's not going to be easy, it's going to be some of the most difficult political turf war that we will see in this very complicated business, but it's a good point.

There's another way to reduce Hydro rates. I spoke earlier about how important that is to jobs. Mr McGuinly understood that it was important to jobs. The other way to reduce Hydro rates is to break up this monopoly and move to a competitive system. A competitive system is a system that's based on many generators and many distributors competing with one another to safely and reliably provide energy to many consumers at the most competitive market price. Lo and behold, as we take this step, not only are we talking about 0% now, but here we have an article, "T.O. Hydro Bills May Drop 20%," James Wallace says, "Toronto consumers should be the first to benefit from plans to deregulate Ontario Hydro."

I tend to agree with him. If we look at the Ontario Hydro rate increases over the years, we can see that in the years under the Liberals and NDP we had substantial increases under the Liberals but massive increases under the NDP — 8.5%, 12%, 8%, 12%. Then you come along and you see someone with the backbone of a Mike Harris, who has the courage to run on a commitment to freeze Hydro rates, and sure enough, with the commitment, in 1995, 0%; in 1996, 0%. That will continue.

Mr Maves: I want to congratulate the member for Simcoe Centre on his very wise remarks. He always does a very good job when speaking to bills in the Legislature, and tonight is no exception. One of the things he talked about was rates. I want to quote from a Hansard from this place on September 23, 1991, from Dalton McGuinly, currently Liberal leader: "There is a direct correlation between Hydro's rates and our rate of unemployment in Ontario. As the rates go up, so will the rate of unemployment."

Yes, there will be economies of scale in the greater Toronto area and even in northern areas in and around Thunder Bay and Timmins, but I don't know when you last drove from Calabogie to Kladagar, but there's a lot of territory, and being in the electricity distribution business is not going to give you a very big return on your investment.

I want to say to the member for Sault Ste Marie that he

might want to read a speech by the esteemed Maurice F. Strong, then chair of Ontario Hydro, to the Canadian Electrical Association, July 4, 1995, before this debate is over, because the sainted Mr Strong, no enemy of the former government, certainly had some very radical things to suggest about new possibilities.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Simcoe Centre.

Mr Tascona: I'd like to thank the members for Yorkview, Sault Ste Marie, Niagara Falls and Renfrew

North for their comments.

With respect to the member for Yorkview, he focuses

on the environmental impact that he perceives, or I would say imagines, could result from Bill 35 and provides no evidence in support of his perceptions. But I would point out that the Ontario Energy Board has a very significant role with respect to protecting the environment. Their role

would facilitate energy efficiency and the use of cleaner, more environmentally benign energy sources. Also, the regulations in the statute require electricity retailers to disclose information on the type and amount of emissions from the generation facility from which the electricity being sold was produced and, of more importance, require generators selling power in the Ontario market to meet specified environmental standards. That should satisfy the member for Yorkview once he reads the bill.

The member for Sault Ste Marie focuses on consumer protection. It's very clear that the Ontario Energy Board's regulatory role would strengthen their role in fact to better protect electricity and gas consumers and to ensure that efficiencies achieved in the monopoly parts of the industry benefit all customers. Their role would be to protect consumer interests regarding prices, reliability and quality of electricity service. Also, they would have broader powers to enforce codes of conduct relating to the businesses of utilities and marketers selling gas to residential consumers. So there are significant protections for consumers in this bill.

In closing, I'd just like to say that the members for Niagara Falls and Renfrew North certainly have hit it on the nail in that there will be decreased energy costs as a result of the bill.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Collier: I will share my time with the member for Downsview.

Bill 35 raises some intriguing questions. Our party is more than willing to look at and examine it. We're looking forward to the committee hearings going across the province in examination of Bill 35. It is a real watershed bill in terms of one of the most important things that affects the economy and the social wellbeing of this province. Every-

1950

As you know, in Connecticut and New York state the one thing that's very apparent is that this whole field of deregulation of and competition with public utilities is a gold mine for lobbyists. In fact, I'll read from the New York Times earlier this year where they said, on April 19, "The idea of ending electrical utility monopolies and opening the \$200-billion" — and that's a lot of money even in Sarnia — "power market to competition is a national policy craze". It's one of the flavours of the month, we know. "And while no one is quite sure how it will work, one thing is certain: It's a gold mine for lobbyists."

You know that every electrical lobbyist in North America is lined up at the door of the whiz kids. They're trying to find out how they can be part of the action. That's why I say these lobbyists are going to make sure the big guys on Bay Street are going to be well protected as we go through this transition. What our party is worried about is, who is going to be looking after the interests of the ordinary person who is worried about paying that hydro bill? Who will be lobbying for them? It certainly won't be the high-priced, Bay Street lobbyists that sometimes charge you 5,000 bucks an hour. They won't be lobbying for Mrs Jones on Main Street, but they'll be lobbying for the big guys on Bay Street.

That is one thing I hope people will be able to bring some scrutiny to. What is the role of these lobbyists? This government, two or three years ago, promised the registration of lobbyists and the control of these lobbyists. We haven't seen any of that yet. Maybe they should bring in that control of those Bay Street lobbyists before this bill becomes law, to see who are the lobbyists behind this huge undertaking we're about to enter into. I certainly

experience, that the big players will be taken care of. Because we can rest assured, as we know from the US screening that takes place, that there is a body that protects the consumers as we go through this transition, should hopefully come out of these hearings and the had Hydro in this province. That's the commitment that the most significant we've had in the 90-odd years we've change, because the changes are enormous; I think they're government that protects consumers as we go through this massive transition on Hydro, there be a significant part of anything about, it's critical that, as we go through this door-to-door scanners which this government didn't do the deregulation of natural gas, with the fly-by-night, If you also look at what happened in recent years over

perplexing. come-ons, the promos on TV, are quite confusing and service in telephone rates, and a lot of the ads, a lot of the know who to go to in terms of a more affordable, better trying on the consumer. A lot of consumers really don't instance, in the telephone business, some of that is very As we've gone through a form of deregulation, for better bill.

body, big and small, in this province is going to be affected by Bill 35. I hope the public will join in the scrutiny of this bill, which I think will make it a much

would like to know who they are so we'll see who is influencing the government on this.

As it says here in the New York Times, "What makes the bill such a magnet for lobbyists is that it touches so many moneyed interests." In other words, they know that this kind of legislation could have a huge impact on financial markets and on our major corporations. So the major corporations and the banks will be hiring the best lobbyists money can buy to protect their interests. That's why it's critical that the government recognize that the public interest has to be protected and that the ordinary consumer has to be protected as we go through this massive change we're about to embark on. This change will only be beneficial to the public if it's a transparent change and an understandable one.

The big concern is that the massive changes that sometimes take place become very convoluted as far as the public is concerned. They're not able to be protected when there is too much change without public protection. The public should be protected as we go through this change, because Ontario Hydro, this public utility, belongs to the people. It doesn't belong to government, it doesn't belong to big business; it belongs to the people of Ontario. It's one of our historical heritages that we have, and I think it is incumbent upon this government to remember this at all times. The benefits of this change as we go through it should always go back to the people first, ordinary people, and not to the moneyed interests who will be there lined up. God love the people with big dollars for all their successes, but there will take care of themselves, and I think the government's got to realize that you also have to put in infrastructures so that the consumer will be protected.

That's been certainly the case in point in the United States because money is going to be here, big money. We're talking about, in the United States, \$200 billion. Here we're talking, we throw around, \$30 billion in stranded debt as if it's something on the Visa bill. We're talking about the future of the province here, and that's why I think it can't be business as usual. There have got to be steps whereby the consumer will be protected. Because in the long run, as you know, the mistakes we've made in the past — and I know people like to talk about the mistakes made in recent years, but I say the 42 years of Tory rule in Ontario certainly weren't perfect. Some of the critical mistakes that they made in those 42 years are what we're paying for today. It's critical that we look upon this as a shared responsibility whereby we do the right thing and we do it in a transparent way where the consumer is protected.

I'll read you another quote from the New York Times where they talk about the American experience. As you know, this government and we as Canadians always try to find out from the mistakes they make in the United States, and maybe in England, to improve upon them and hopefully we can learn by their mistakes. One other comment from another New York Times article says:

"They call it 'a convulsion of huge importance' and say that it 'will cost the public upwards of \$500 billion.' That is the amount, they say, that utilities have tied up in debt

an allowed word.

Mr. William Saunderson (Eglinton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I don't think the member should be referring to the Niagara casino scandal. "Scandal" is not

The Acting Speaker: I will rule that it's in order.

Mr. Colle: I know the members of the government don't like the opposition talking freely. They want to restrict our speech. Basically, we've had problems with the bid for the new Niagara casino. They've been reported; they've been investigated twice now. Call it because you rushed into the thing. You rushed into the gambling. Don't rush into people's hydro. This is not your hydro company; it's the people's. Do it deliberately, do it fairly, do it aboveboard, do it transparently. Don't rush

the investigation after the fact.

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pass along to ratepayers and taxpayers."

The Minister of Finance is going to be charged with dealing with that stranded debt, whether it goes to Servco or Genco and how long and for how many years and at what rate that has to be paid down. That mechanism is a critical component of this legislation and what happens in terms of the regulations that come out of this bill, that we ensure that the user of the utility isn't charged higher rates because of this massive transition we're going through. I would hope there would be benchmarks; there have to be guideposts and there has to be continual monitoring of this change as this goes through. Without that, there will no doubt be repercussions as far as the ordinary consumer is concerned, and that is what we have to think about. A lot of people say, "It's just another bill," but that hydro bill or even something simple like a water bill, can mean the difference between someone on a fixed income making it for that month or not. That's what we forget sometimes, when we see the rosy pictures painted on the financial pages and on these money shows on television. You never see that pensioner on one of those money shows; you never see one of those Bay Street lobbyists visit Widow Jones in the small town of Petrolia or something. Find out what he or she has to do to make ends meet on paying these bills. The bills come in fast and furious, whether it be the cable bill, the hydro bill, the water bill, the property tax bill. As you know, the property tax bills are even delayed for four or five months because this government has messed that all up. A lot of seniors have come to me and say: "Where is my bill? What's happening?" I say: "Phone up Mr. Leach. Phone up the Premier. They are in charge now."

That's what we're coming to here. This government is embarking on a precarious adventure. I hope this adventure is not one whereby the consumer is left to fend for himself or herself, because there's so much at stake here. The dollars, the equity, the ethics of this whole adventure have to be closely monitored in every aspect. The critical thing, as we saw from the Niagara casino scandal, is that there be a process put in place first, before all these mistakes are made about conflict of interest, that you don't do

into this. You're playing with something that is very important to every Ontarian. Be cautious; be concerned.

2000

Ms Annamarie Castriulli (Downsview): I'm happy to

rise to speak to this legislation. I think we all agree that there is a great need for change in the area of electricity and the electricity marketplace in Ontario. For too long we've been saddled with at least the perception if not the fact of a Hydro enterprise that seems to be out of control, so we support Bill 35 in principle. Any legislation that seeks to bring clarity to the issue, that seeks to make the marketplace a more competitive one in the interests of the consumer is one that bears looking at with great scrutiny. It's with that in mind that I want to place my comments here today.

Although we may agree in principle on (1) the need for this legislation and (2) the need for transparency and fairness, the bill leaves much unsaid, and that is really the crux of the matter for many of us today as we speak to this piece of legislation.

It's obvious that safe and affordable energy is vital not only to the consumer but certainly to the benefit of our economy in Ontario. I would hope that the government at the very least, recognizing that there is an important public interest in this legislation, will allow significant public input through hearings throughout the province to gain the best advice we can possibly get, to make this the best bill possible in this very critical area.

The concerns, however, are these, and they need to be addressed and they will have to be faced by the government. First, we know that Hydro will be split into two separate arm's-length corporations fully owned by the province. When that happens, there will be an issue of Hydro's debt of some \$32 billion. The question, of course, is who is going to bear that debt. Is it going to be the ordinary consumer, will it be the retail and farm electricity? These are questions that are certainly not addressed by the legislation.

Second, it's not clear who will pay for Hydro's \$8-billion plan to bring its nuclear plants up to par, something which we understand is necessary and again is not addressed in this particular legislation.

Third, will industry regulators be able to be tough watchdogs, with the power to make sure that the plan that is to be in place does not result in windfall profits for companies and higher costs for consumers? Again the legislation is very silent. There is no mechanism to deal with that.

Finally, I think the biggest question of all for average consumers and taxpayers is, what are the actual benefits for residential and farm customers? It comes down to a very simple issue: Will the ordinary consumer, the senior citizen on a fixed income in this province, who has to contend with payments of all kinds, be asked to pay a higher rate, a rate that he or she may not be able to afford, and will it be phased in, if that's the case, or will it be all at once? These are quite substantial issues for ordinary people.

The reason we're concerned is because so much of the effective practice of this legislation will be left to regulation — regulation that will not be brought before this House, that will not be debated, that will not have the scrutiny of the members of this House, that will not be put to public hearings; in short, that remains the purview of the government and the government alone, and has no significant public input. That's a very serious situation and that's why the question needs to be asked now, so that we can have some assurances from the government.

It's obvious that these are serious concerns. We've seen some of these enunciated in various correspondence, in editorials, in articles. I'd like to focus on some of the ones that make just that point. I read from the Standard of St Catharines-Niagara of Monday of this week, which clearly says: "Where the power will come from and how much it will cost are among the factors still very much up in the air as the energy industry in Ontario grapples with deregulation.... No one is able to say for certain what impact Hydro's so-called stranded debt will have on the cost of flipping a light switch." Then it goes on to quote Tom Connell, managing director of Canadian ratings at Standard and Poor's in Toronto, who said, "In the near term, in the next three to five years, prices are highly unpredictable."

I think that's what consumers are worried about: What does "unpredictable" mean? Will it mean that the extra taxes that will have to be paid by successor corporations to Hydro will be saddled on to the ordinary consumer's bill, and does that mean that in the next three or five years their rates could skyrocket? I think we would agree that that would be an undesirable effect of this legislation and one the government certainly needs to turn its mind to.

The Toronto Star earlier this week also dealt with the issue that there are questions that need to be answered: "Hydro's staggering debt will be apportioned," it says.

There's also debate over whether anyone is looking after the interests of homeowners and whether the government is simply getting ready for privatization. That is again a concern of ordinary people: Is the agenda really to make the marketplace more competitive and to benefit the consumer, or is it simply a question of selling off Hydro to the highest bidder at the lowest possible price, with ensuing results for ordinary people?

What price will Ontarians pay for electricity? That's a central question. When this legislation is effected, what price will Ontarians pay? It isn't at all clear what that will be.

In the end, it's not just the ordinary individual who is concerned about this. We know there is no guarantee that rates will be lower. In fact, Bill Farlinger, who heads up Hydro at the moment, has said very clearly that he does not expect that rates will be lower. I think that's a pretty high authority on the subject of cost.

As I conclude, I'd like to quote Mr Farlinger, who says: "Nobody really knows what the price of power is going to be when competition comes in. History tells us the price goes down, but that's a leap of faith." I think consumers

require more than just a leap of faith from this government

in these economic times.

Finally, I'd simply like to quote the chair of the Municipal Electric Association, who, while supportive, says, "Our members who serve on the front lines of the industry continue to be concerned that our customers may end up paying a lot more for their electricity because the generation sector must be made competitive."

These are real worries. They're worries of ordinary people. They're worries of some of the industry participants. There are issues there that the government must address, and we hope they will do that through public hearings.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Len Wood: I want to comment on the member for

Oakwood and the member for Downsview's remarks. They have raised a lot of issues, a lot of questions that have been unanswered: What are hydro rates going to be after this new bill becomes law? What is the debt going to be? People out there want to know what the debt is going to be and who's going to be paying for the debt after the company is split up into a number of different companies. We've had a company, Ontario Hydro, in existence for I believe 92 years, and there's no doubt that the company has to be fixed. There are problems with it, and there have been ever since the Conservative government of the day decided to bring in nuclear power and as a result ran up a debt of \$30 billion or \$35 billion under Bill Davis in the 1970s.

That could have been stopped the minute the government found out that Darlington was out of control. They were going to spend \$4 billion, and then the estimate went up to \$7 billion and \$9 billion, and then finally up to more than \$14 billion. At the point where it was discovered it was going to be more than \$4 billion, the Conservative government at that time should have shut that construction down and should have got out of the nuclear business altogether.

When we became the government, we decided that it was very important that we put a freeze on nuclear power construction in Ontario. We felt that for 20 years nuclear power plants had been built, and they were supposed to be cost-efficient and were supposed to produce the cleanest power right across this province, but it did not happen. The minute they get into a little bit of trouble, the debt goes sky-high, and here we are now trying to fix problems of the Conservative government for 40 years.

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Mrs Johns: I think it's important for the NDP to have a look at the select committee hearings and I think at that point they'll recognize that they have two outstanding issues they need to look at very carefully. The first, of course, is the dichotomy they talk about: They don't want nuclear power but they want clean, environmentally friendly electricity. Nuclear power is one of those kinds of powers that can give us that clean, environmentally friendly electricity. That's a big issue they have to look at

The second is that although there were some costs certainly and there were cost overruns in all the nuclear plants — there have been throughout the world — what's important to recognize is that Hydro has been out of control for a very long time. It was out of control in the 1990s. We saw the huge rate increases; my colleague showed the rate increases. They have to recognize that people in Ontario, businesses and residential people, cannot continue to pay escalating rates. Mike Harris and the Premier of the province controlled those rates for these last four or five years, but that cannot continue indefinitely. We have to make substantial changes.

To the member for Oakwood I would like to say that I appreciated his talk. One of the things I think is important for him to have a good look at is the Ontario Energy Board Act section within Bill 35. We have provided increased consumer protection by giving more and more responsibilities to the Ontario Energy Board. We have tried to strengthen the energy board so that they're more than just a regulator with a lack of teeth, as they have been in the past. They're going to be licensing market operators. They're going to be putting forward a code of conduct that people who are going to sell gas and electricity within the province will have to live within. There are going to be serious penalties if people do not follow that code of conduct.

Mr Conway: I want to commend my colleagues for their remarks. I think they're both quite right in putting the emphasis on what this is going to mean to Main Street, what it's going to mean to the average residential and/or farm customer, because at the end of the day that's going to be the critical test. I'm hopeful there's a way to develop this policy so that at least can be positively met, but the experience in other jurisdictions gives me some pause.

Ms Castelli from Downsview asked a question, what is the likely cost of recovering the stranded debt going to be on the household charge? At a conference sponsored by Scotiabank on this very subject in New York City on April 16, 1998, at which Jim Wilson, Minister of Energy for Ontario, was the keynote speaker, one of the panelists that day, Ms Patricia Mohr, vice-president of global energy industry analysis with the Bank of Nova Scotia, estimated, quoting from the notes of someone who was there, "Ms Mohr said that the recovery of stranded debt could boost electricity rates by 1.6 cents per kilowatt-hour once the rate freeze is lifted in the year 2000." That's one estimate of the cost of that stranded debt on one's bill.

A while ago, I think it was the member for Niagara Falls who was going on about costs over the last 10 or 15 years. A big part of that had to do with the way in which we budgeted for the nuclear projects. You couldn't put the capital costs on rates until the plant started to actually produce power. One can be very distinguishous with those data. I simply remember — listen, I'm not interested in the politics of it, because we've all been there. In retrospect, we made some mistakes with Darlington when we inherited it half built. The point I'd make now, though, is that everybody says the only way to go is combined cycle

which hopefully will control that, but I think that's the tip of the iceberg which can happen when you see the moneyed interests that are going to be looking at this whole field of deregulation.

There's just one final comment from Richard Foot from the Ottawa Citizen in June of this year to see who we're following on this road:

"More than half a dozen countries have blazed a similar trail in the last two decades. It was General Augusto Pinochet who started the trend, exposing Chile's power system to market forces. Now Premier Mike Harris is leading Ontario in much the same direction."

I don't know. When we're following the likes of Pinochet, I really worry about that person and their gas bill and their hydro bill and who their rights are going to be sold to. So beware.

The Speaker: Further debate? The member for Cochrane North.

Mr Len Wood: Thanks for the opportunity to enter the debate on Bill 35. For the people who are out there listening tonight, Bill 35 is a bill that has 160 pages of different rules and regulations and it's called An Act to create jobs and protect consumers by promoting low-cost energy through competition, to protect the environment, to provide for pensions and to make related amendments to certain Acts.

There's a lot of material in this bill and there's a very fancy title out there, "An Act to create jobs." It seems like this government puts that name on almost every bill that they come in with and yet they haven't created any jobs. We still have high unemployment in parts of northern Ontario.

The competition in this part of the bill — there's no doubt we, as the NDP caucus, feel that some competition brought into Ontario Hydro needed to be done. We also feel that Ontario Hydro had to be fixed but not at any price. What is the price for fixing Ontario Hydro? Does it mean that the residential users, the farmers, the small businesses out there are going to have an increase in prices of hydro rates as rates for large corporations and industrial users throughout this province go down?

We still haven't got answers and we've been asking what the stranded debt is out there. We have all different kinds of estimates. Now the information we're getting is that the Ministry of Finance under Ernie Eves is going to go out and get a busload of financial whizzes and they're going to bring them into the Ministry of Finance and they're going to decide who's going to pay for the stranded debt that's out there and how much it is. Is it \$15 billion, is it \$30 billion or is it \$35 billion?

We have a bill that's brought in, as I said before, with 160 pages of changes that are being made and yet it has created probably 200, 300 or 400 pages of questions that we're not able to get answers for. Is this privatization by the back door? I personally believe it is. The former Minister of Health, who has now become the Minister of Energy because Mike Harris had to make a switch, has said that he's not looking for privatization for probably

natural gas — everybody. I wonder what happens if something surprising happens in that market.

Mr Martin: Thank you, Speaker, for allowing me this opportunity to comment on the remarks of the members for Downsview and Oakwood. They both spoke to an issue that we over here have some real, great concern about, and that's this whole question: Are we heading down the road to privatization, and if we are, which I suspect we are, who is out there waiting to eat up this very lucrative business that's possible, particularly that part of it that is more competitive than others?

Mr Conway: The Power Workers are out there with a pile of money.

Mr Martin: Well, we did that in Sault Ste Marie with Algoma Steel and we came up with something rather interesting and successful.

My concern, though, is when you move into this private sector, privatization of energy, a resource that is so important to all of us who live and work in Ontario, and throw it out there to an industry or to people in an industry that really aren't that interested in whether we get hydro or energy in a timely fashion and at a price that's affordable.

Those who suggest that this isn't putting us on the road to privatization only need to look at some of the more recent history around Ontario Hydro. This government put privatization right in the contract of the new president, when they opened the doors to British Energy to negotiate with Hydro behind closed doors. Then early this month they appointed a British serial privatizer, Sir Graham Day, someone who has led three privatizations in Britain, to the Hydro board. We only have to look at what happened in Britain when Margaret Thatcher took that country down the road to the privatization of almost everything. It was out of that we moved away from a whole lot of the very important regulations that were in place and we ended up with some parts of Britain not having water and with mad cow disease. That's what you get.

The Speaker: Thank you. Questions and comments? Response, Member for Oakwood.

Mr Collie: I thank my colleagues for their interesting comments and questions. I certainly want to commend the member for Kenfrew North for his insightful and historical going to need his insight to keep the government true as and, I think, very, very thorough look at this issue. We're they go through this. Hopefully, he'll be able to keep them in line before they are too reckless as they usually are.

I remember I got a letter this week from a constituent of mine who said: "I have this thing that my wife signed seven years ago with this door-to-door gas broker and I'm trying to get out of it. She phoned up Consumers Gas, and I saw the letter back from Consumers Gas that said, 'Sorry, your wife signed this contract back in 1991 and then that fly-by-night scam artist sold your rights to some other company and they have you for another eight years.'" This is the type of garbage that's been going on in this province for the last number of years in the field of natural gas brokers. I know there's a piece of this legislation

five years, but we know for a fact that some of the people they've brought in to talk about privatization and the splitting up of Ontario Hydro into different sectors were involved with Margaret Thatcher in England. As a result, the taxpayers in England were ripped off by all the privatization that took place there. Now Mike Harris has brought in these same privatizers. Sir Graham Day is one of the people they've brought in, and he led three privatizations in Britain before and it's a mess. It's a serious mess in England and it's not the type of mess we want here.

Our NDP caucus, under the leadership of Howard Hampton, has taken a position on nuclear power. It was not needed in Ontario, it was not called for, but the Conservative government of the day decided that nuclear power was going to be the answer to cheap power or clean power in Ontario and now we find out that it has become a real disaster. If you look back into the 1970s, nobody in the world is building nuclear power plants, unless, as one of my colleagues told me today, a government buys it for them and builds it for them and says: "Here, we've done everything for you. Now you can start up your nuclear power plant." Nobody in the world is building nuclear power plants.

"There are ways of resolving the problems that Hydro got itself into with the support of Bill Davis. As I said earlier, back in the early 1980s some of that debt could have been stopped when Darlington was out of control as far as construction was concerned, when it was estimated at \$4 billion and it went to \$7 billion. It could have been stopped at that time, but at that time there was a change of government. The Conservatives were put in the penalty box after 42 years of messing up the province of Ontario and the Liberals came in. They decided that they were going to continue with building Darlington and, as a result, we ended up with the debt that we had. The NDP decided that nuclear power was not the right way to go and to ban any more nuclear power. I don't believe that the nuclear generators that are out there that could not be operated safely should be rebuilt. I think they should be put into mothballs and there should be decommissioning done. There are other ways of producing good power. The bill and some of the briefings that we've had leave the door wide open as far as privatization is concerned. It's pretty clear that the government who campaigned in 1995 on privatization — they were going to privatize everything. They were going to privatize Ontario Hydro. They were going to privatize the liquor stores. They were going to privatize TVOntario. Now they've decided that the liquor stores are generating a lot of money; casinos are generating a lot of money.

Mike Harris was not going to close hospitals in the province and we saw 35 hospitals closed. We saw announcements out there that there are probably close to 100 schools that are going to be closed in southern Ontario, northern Ontario as we're — is this what you want to see happen to Ontario Hydro? When you have promises that are made in the 1995 election campaign, they're not kept. It's strictly a broken promise. Mike

Harris was saying, "I'm not going to close hospitals." He closed 35. He was saying, "I'm going to privatize Ontario. Now I'm not going to privatize Ontario Hydro, but I might somewhere down the line."

We have to look deep into the minds of the Conservative government, the backbenchers, and the whiz kids that are following the exact notes — I notice that they're doing the script now as far as Ontario Hydro is concerned. The bill is tabled in here and we're debating second reading of Bill 35. But there are more questions out there than there are answers. Day after day, we're looking for the government to give us answers on what's going to happen to hydro rates and who's going to pay for the debts. Are residential users going to —

Mr Lessard: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe the member for Cochrane North is making some very interesting points and we should have a quorum here to listen to what he has to say.

The Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is not present.

The Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present.

Mr Len Wood: As I was pointing out, there are ways of producing clean energy, and northern Ontario is a good example of that. The consumers are happy when you can produce electricity from hydroelectric generating plants. We have all kinds of hydroelectric generating plants that have been operating for years and they have never run into the maintenance problems and the health problems that nuclear power plants give. We have Northland Power and a number of other companies that, as we're speaking today, are building generating plants. Some are using gas from natural gas. Others are using a combination of natural gas and sawdust or bark waste from sawmills and paper mills. There are at least half a dozen that were built under the NDP government that are a new type of hydroelectric generating plant and they produce a lot of electricity. Under the old rules, the only way they can sell is, they have to negotiate an agreement with Ontario Hydro and sell at those rates to Ontario Hydro. There's no doubt about it that by making some of the changes here, that's going to be good for them.

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I just want to touch a little bit on the Power Workers union there. They were concerned for the last two or three years that privatization might mean an end to their jobs. They've managed to negotiate some agreements that they feel half comfortable with, splitting up the company into smaller units, but I'm sure that when the Minister of Energy and the Premier get recommendations back from the group they've brought in from England as far as privatization, they will be up in arms as well.

We've got to look at the environment. What type of coal is going to be brought in? Is it going to be dirty coal that is going to be brought in to fire up the plants that we need during the peak seasons? Where is the coal going to come from? Is it the dirty coal that is going to come in

Ontario, because it's not clean and cheap power as people led other people to believe back in the early 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. It's a power that is very expensive to build and very expensive to maintain and now we're seeing the problems we're faced with.

The decision to bring in the British serial privatizer, Sir Graham Day, who led privatizations in Britain, I don't believe was the right answer. We know what happened in Britain when they decided to privatize hydro, privatize water, privatize sewers. It's a mess out there. People are paying more. The companies that managed to get a hand on through the privatization are making big profits, but they're making profits at the expense of the taxpayers. It's taxpayers who built that as they did Ontario Hydro. For the last 90 years or more, I believe it's 92 years since Ontario Hydro was started, it was responsible to the people of Ontario and the operating costs and the debt were being paid through hydro rates and hydro was supposed to be produced at cost. What is the cost now because of the mess that we've been put into by the Bill Davis government in the 1970s? Then the Liberals could have made a decision back in the early 1980s, but they decided to go the other way and continued.

In the 1990s, the decision was made that nuclear power was not safe, that it was not healthy, and the NDP government decided they would freeze it. There were no more nuclear plants being built in Ontario because they were expensive, they were unhealthy and they did not do the job that people said they were going to do. We really believe we made the right decision.

When we are re-elected in 1999, we will continue to make sure that nuclear power is put on the back burner, because it's been a failure around the world. It does not work. It does not produce cheap rates for consumers and it's not doing the job that they thought it would. On the other hand, if this is the end result of Bill 35 in two or three or four years down the road, privatization and hydro rates are going to go through the roof for the residential users and be lower for industrial users. That is not the answer either. There has to be a better way of dealing with Ontario Hydro. We cannot fix Ontario Hydro at all costs through the consumers of this province. That would be a real mistake if that would happen. That is my fear, because we know what is happening to education and health care under Mike Harris. Is that what you want to happen under Ontario Hydro — the mess they've created under education and health care?

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The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mrs. Johns: I'd like to comment on the member for Cochrane South's presentation. I'd like to say that his remembrance of history is certainly somewhat different than mine. For the people at home I would like to suggest that 70% of the power we have in Ontario comes from nuclear power. So if this government was going to shut down nuclear power in the five years they were in government, God help us all. We would turn on the switch and there would be no power. There would be no light, there would be no refrigerator, there would be no

from the States or is it going to be other types that are low in sulphur?

There are a lot of questions out there. I don't believe that two weeks of public hearings in August is going to answer any of those questions. Probably we're still going to have a lot of serious, unanswered questions when we finish the public hearings in August. We might have needed five or six weeks or a couple of months of travelling around the province to get the answers. We've been trying to get answers. The Municipal Electrical Association is still trying to get answers as to what their future is going to be.

As I mentioned at the beginning, one of the aspects of this government's deciding how they're going to deal with debt is, when they can't get answers from the board of directors of Ontario Hydro, they put it into the hands of the Minister of Finance to come up with what they feel is debt, because nobody seems to know whether it's \$14 billion, \$15 billion, \$30 billion or what it is. In any event, all these billions of dollars of debt were generated by a former Conservative government when they decided to build the nuclear power plants which we've now seen are a disaster.

I'm well aware of the all-party committee that travelled around the province last year to get feedback from the public on what they should do with the future of Ontario Hydro. I'm well aware of those meetings that took place and the recommendations that are coming through. But to dismantle Hydro at any price I feel is not the solution to the problems that have been built up over the 1960s and 1970s and during the 1990s were being brought under control with some of the reductions in staff and getting things back in line. But it's very hard to deal with a situation that's been allowed to get out of control by previous governments in the 1970s and 1980s.

What are the rates going to be for the residential consumers and the small businesses? Are they going to have to share the burden of this debt, or is it going to be split evenly among the large industrial users and the corporate sector, or are the corporate and industrial rates going to go down, which we suspect they will. They will be substantially reduced by the Mike Harris government under this bill and under any regulations they might bring in the future. But what are the municipal consumers going to have to pay for hydro in order to help pay down that debt and help reconstruct any problems that might be out there?

The Minister of Energy is telling us, "I've been assured the rates are going to go down." I have not been given any guarantee that the rates are going to go down until such time as the Minister of Finance or the Premier could come into the House and clarify the situation and say, "We've studied what the debt is; this is how we're going to deal with it and this is exactly what the rates are going to be for the next number of years," rather than leaving everything up in the air.

As I said at the beginning, we know that there were serious problems with nuclear power. Nuclear power was something that should never have been brought into

business. It's not logical to even think about closing down nuclear power. Governments in the past made decisions about nuclear power and we have to live with them.

I'm still optimistic that I'm going to be able to convince the NDP that this is a good bill and it's good for Ontario.

So I'd like to make a couple of comments about the environment. We have some quotes from some people here

and I think it's important that we hear from them.

We have a quote from Greenpeace. They say that this legislation is an opportunity for "the significant chunk of the public that wants to buy green power." For the first

time in history, these people who want to buy green power are going to be able to buy it.

Tom Adams of Energy Probe is not probably a friend of the government, but he says about this bill:

"Customers are going to get to see where their power comes from and what emissions are associated with it. So it's a consumer empowerment that should really help the

clean power industries promote themselves as an alternative to polluting ones."

What we're doing is allowing the people of Ontario to make decisions to buy green power if they want to, and

I'm sure that the member for Cochrane South will be very pleased with that, because he'll be able to buy green

power in his home in Cochrane South. This is a good thing.

Mr Sergio: The member for Cochrane North addressed a couple of very important points from a —

Mr Colle: A good speech.

Mr Sergio: Yes, a good speech on a very complex and voluminous bill. Especially too the important thing is that,

yes, we are trying to privatize Ontario Hydro by going through the back door here. Also he mentioned the

accountability of the system, if you will, how we'll be serving the taxpayers and the customers in the future. As

well, who is going to be paying for what and how much; we have seen it with the various gas brokers as to who is

going to pay and how much they are paying.

I'd like to mention as well the \$6 billion to \$8 billion the government will have to shell out to bring the system

up to par and then probably even sell it. I mean, do we charge them the cost, spend taxpayers' money, to bring it

up to par and then sell it to the private sector?

The other important aspect that the member was so valiantly bringing to our attention is the fact that it lack

regulations. There are absolutely no regulations in this particular piece of legislation when it comes to the other

new corporations. There is absolutely no control whatsoever. There is no way of knowing how they are going to

be delivering the power supply to the customers and if the residential customers indeed will be having to pay more

than farmers or less than the industrial-commercial customers. That is something that is not spelled out anywhere

in the legislation and we would like to know, the people of Ontario would like to know, should know, prior to the

approval of this legislation.

Mr Martin: I want to commend the member for Cochrane North for his comments this evening. He again

speaks to that major concern that we over here have with

this bill, that is, the fear that this is taking us down the road to privatization, which in our view will not be in the best interests of the consumers out there to whom the government says this bill is targeted by way of cost

savings and reduced costs for energy.

Our fear is that, like everything else that's turned over to the private sector, eventually the big corporations,

usually offshore, are poised, ready to move in and take over. When they take over, there is no competition any

more. We've seen that in many different industrial sectors in the province. I've done some work myself in the area of

franchising and small business. There was a time in this province when it was possible for the small entrepreneur

to actually get into business and make a profit and do well.

That's becoming less and less the case any more because the big operator controls everything, and when he controls

everything he sets the prices, and when he sets the prices he never brings them down, they always go up.

In any instance in my experience or in what I've read, where the private sector has come in and taken over an

area of activity in a jurisdiction with the stated purpose of bringing the price down, and they've made all the argu-

ments, in fact the price has never gone down, no matter what government does, it seems. Industry has a way of

making an argument for at least holding the line or increasing prices. The day that you show me an instance

of where that in fact happens might be the day that I will accept some of the arguments that you're making re this

piece of legislation —

The Speaker: Questions and comments? Member for Niagara Falls.

Mr Maves: You sounded so disappointed there, Speaker.

The Speaker: Member for Niagara Falls.

Mr Maves: Thank you very much, Speaker.

It's my pleasure to rise and speak to the comments from the member for Cochrane North. It's always interesting to

hear his meanderings.

One of the things he talked about was a fear of British Energy. The NDP has always had, and still has, this

bizarre 1960s fear of foreign investment that might come into Ontario. I notice there's an article in the Ottawa

Citizen about British Energy. It's nice to see that the Liberals on the opposite side don't share that view of the

NDP any more. They seem to be happy that there's some

outside private interests for Ontario Hydro.

"British Energy has turned around the battered British nuclear industry since it was privatized in the late 1980s and it could offer a breath of fresh air, new management

This article goes on to quote Sean Conway, who co-chaired last year's Ontario legislative committee on Hydro's nuclear affairs. "Mr Conway also welcomed the

interests of private bidders willing to enter a partnership with Hydro. He said: 'British Energy is highly regarded

by independent experts. They had a better record in the last 10 years than Ontario Hydro. It may very well be time

for Ontario Hydro to partner with companies who have a much more positive record in recent times."

and are now among the highest — in fact, they're the third highest — of all the hydro rates across Canada.

Electricity rates in Ontario have grown a staggering 54% faster than the consumer price index just since 1986. Now we have a situation where Ontario industries pay a far higher rate for their electricity than most of their other competitors, particularly their competitors on the other side of the border.

Add to that the future prospects when we compare the jurisdictions in the United States to ourselves and recognize that most of them have already crossed the philosophical hurdle and have decided to deregulate their energy industry. They understand that —

Mr Martin: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I don't think we have a quorum to listen to the eloquent gentleman regaling us here this evening.

The Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present.

Speaker.

The Speaker: Member for Scarborough East.

Mr Gilchrist: I appreciate the interest the member for Sault Ste Marie has taken in the comments from the government side.

As I was saying, not only is the status quo providing increasingly desperate prospects for the industry located in Ontario, but the decision made by almost every American state to deregulate has left the prospect that, particularly in the northeastern United States, they expect to see their rates falling tremendously over the next few years.

Electricity costs for many of the heavy industries which have located in our province can sometimes amount to 5% of their total operating costs — a staggering percentage. It is particularly important in areas such as pulp and paper, primary metals and transportation. In fact, and perhaps it will come as news to the members in this chamber, the largest consumer of electricity in Ontario is the Kidd Creek mine, just outside Timmins in northern Ontario.

So there's no doubt that in recognition of the need to be competitive, lower electricity prices would help to ensure that we not only attract but retain the important jobs we need to continue to rebuild the economy of the province.

It would be very easy for us to rest on our laurels. As I'm sure you've heard, and as unfortunately perhaps the newspapers don't recognize often enough, 376,000 net new jobs have been created in this province since the election in 1995, but we can't stop there. This bill is another important step forward in ensuring that we attract even more jobs — good, high-paying jobs.

It's not just our opinion that will be the consequence. I can quote from two other very respected individuals. When we introduced the bill, Mr Guido Bachmann, who is the chairman of the IPPSA, said: "It's a step in the right direction. This will present an opportunity for independent power producers all across North America to participate in an open market."

Mr Fred Brown, the executive VP of Northland Power, in a letter to the minister said:

We on this side of the House like to see the Liberals getting away from that strange fear of foreign investment and embracing the idea of Ontario Hydro maybe taking on partners, embracing the idea of having an injection of equity into Hydro that will improve the hydro sector and lead to lower rates for everyone in Ontario in the future.

The Speaker: Response?

Mr Len Wood: To the members for Niagara Falls,

Sault Ste Marie, Yorkview and Huron: The member for Huron brought up the point that the NDP government was going to shut down nuclear power. That was not what the NDP government was doing. The NDP government said

we were going to put a freeze on rates, make sure that they were not excessive, and we were not going to build any more new nuclear power plants in Ontario. The reason for that was that you have to find replacement power if you are to shut down that area. Nuclear power produces probably — right now I understand it's not 70%, it's about 40% or 50% of the power in Ontario. But there are a lot of other ways that power can be produced.

One of the comments I was looking at was when Bill Farlinger told reporters after the announcement of this particular bill that he was going to be looking for private investment in nuclear power. Talk about being out of control. If the private sector is going to take over nuclear power, we're all in trouble because even with Ontario Hydro operating them there were a lot of concerns out there.

2050

I'll go back to what I said before. We knew there was a problem with Ontario Hydro. It had to be fixed. But are we going to fix it the same way as we're making a mess with shutting down hospitals, health care in Ontario; closing schools without any replacement for them; and the mess that has happened in northern Ontario, everything that Mike Harris has touched has since he moved to Toronto from North Bay? He goes back to visit North Bay and stands there and turns his back to the north. He's forgotten all about the north. It's one mess after another. Is this another mess, Ontario Hydro now, that the Conservatives have gotten us into?

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Gilchrist: It's a pleasure to rise to speak to this very important bill. Indeed, if I may, as each of the members has focused on different aspects of the bill, I'd like to concentrate on one rationale behind bringing forward this bill that I'm sure is unassailable from any quarter in this chamber. That of course is the impact it will have on stimulating the creation of new jobs and stimulating investment in Ontario.

There's no doubt that Ontario depends tremendously on our exports and the competitiveness of the industry that locates in this province. The cost of electricity is a major factor in determining whether or not to build a plant in this jurisdiction or any other. Over the last decade, unfortunately, the cost advantage that traditionally had been enjoyed by Ontario Hydro in comparison to almost all other jurisdictions in North America has been lost.

Ontario electricity rates rose by 30% in the early 1990s

"In expectation of opportunities resulting from this new environment, Northland Power Inc has committed substantial resources and investment in Ontario. Your actions reinforce our decision to continue investing in Ontario. Ultimately, hundreds of millions of dollars in new investment and significant job creation could materialize from our initiatives alone. In total, we expect this restructuring will generate billions of dollars in new investment in the province."

What exciting news. What an exciting prospect for all Ontarians who are keenly concerned about unemployment rates, particularly in the north, which are still far higher than this government finds acceptable.

Supporting job creation and investment are two of the significant underpinnings of why this bill was brought forward and why we believe it's important to restructure the electricity market in Ontario.

A competitive market, as we envision it in this bill, would put greater price and cost discipline in place on all electricity providers, encouraging savings, new ideas and technological innovation.

The proposed legislation would, as you know, end Ontario Hydro's monopoly and reorganize the company into two new commercial ventures: the Ontario Electricity Generation Corp and the Ontario Electric Services Corp, and a non-profit crown corporation, the Independent Electricity Market Operator, which would act as an impartial manager, ensuring reliable electricity supplies and fair access to the \$10-billion consumer market.

The estimated investment potential for power generation in this province is huge. Over the next 15 to 20 years it's estimated to be at least \$10 billion. This is money that will be spent on creating new generation capacity to serve new demand, as well as replacing older equipment.

It's also expected that in that same time period our transmission system, the wires that carry the electricity to all corners of the province, would require similar new capital investment in the order of \$250 million a year. Similar investments in the distribution system could require up to \$500 million a year — again, an incredibly important stimulus to job creation in Ontario.

We would obviously see operational and service gains in a new, restructured market. Newer, smaller and more efficient power plants, with many of them using renewable energy sources, would help us meet our energy-related environmental targets.

Under the legislation, the electricity generation business would be open to power producers who meet the province's environmental standards and receive a licence to generate electricity. The transmission grid — the wires of the local distribution systems — would become common carriers, allowing power companies to market and sell electricity to consumers anywhere in the province.

Giving power producers access to Hydro's transmission grid would open up new investment opportunities for new generators, cogeneration and renewable forms of energy production.

Companies wishing to participate in the new energy market would require a licence from the Ontario Energy Board to operate and, if selling energy to residential customers, adhere to a very strict code of conduct.

2100

A competitive market would give individuals and businesses greater choice. We would go from a monopoly to a situation far closer to that enjoyed by retailers of almost every other product you could name. Imagine what would happen to prices on any other product, on any other commodity, if you had only one choice, if there was only one supplier. Obviously, if there was only one place to repair cars, the market would charge a far higher price than is the case today.

That's the unfortunate circumstance of having a provincial monopoly such as Ontario Hydro. There has been nobody holding their feet to the fire. There has been nobody guaranteeing the most innovative use of technology, no one guaranteeing the most efficient allocation of human and other resources, no one guaranteeing that the money being spent — man, did they spend a lot of money — was being spent as wisely as it possibly could be. The result is a stranded debt; we've heard estimates of up to \$30 billion. That's the legacy of having only one provider of electricity in Ontario. No competition in any sector means no efficiency, and we hope that this bill sets a very different course.

Of course, having a competitive market does guarantee consumers greater choice. Consumers could choose their own electricity provider either directly or through agents or brokers, as is done now in the natural gas area. This would encourage greater product and service innovation on the part of electricity providers.

There is no doubt, we have demonstrated consistently over the last three years that the primary focus of our government is job creation. The proposed legislation gives us an opportunity to both create jobs and stimulate economic development. Competition and lower electricity rates would have a direct impact on job creation, as well as the increased investment opportunities I have already spoken of.

The potential for employment in an emerging restructured electricity industry would be significant. Let me just give you an example. In the last four years alone, employment in the United States in this sector has doubled — doubled in just four years in what had obviously already been a very mature market; people have been using electricity for 100 years — and some companies have actually seen a tripling of their workforce in four short years.

In addition, close to 400 power marketers, new companies, have been certified since 1989 in the United States, and there is absolutely no reason to believe that we wouldn't see similar growth, similar expansion in the marketplace here in Ontario.

Obviously new generating capacity will be required to meet the growth in our economy. Those 376,000 jobs we have already seen created mean far more workplaces, and far more workplaces with more employees, which means a

higher demand for all commodities but particularly for decentralized generation will spread employment across the province and certainly help avoid the boom-and-bust cycle for local communities where energy megaprojects have been built in the past.

Jobs will be created in new areas, including the aggregation, brokering and marketing of electricity. Convergence opportunities will increase across industries such as electricity, natural gas and telecommunications, including such opportunities as share marketing, billing, trading and infrastructure. Ontario Hydro is already exploring such opportunities through joint ventures with natural gas companies. Other opportunities may exist with cable TV companies, long- and local-distance phone systems and Internet service providers. Convergence will create numerous jobs, many of them highly skilled.

The natural gas industry, as a comparison, is something else in which we're keen to see a continued expansion and increase in jobs and investment. Those statutes have not been updated for over 30 years. The need to recognize the natural gas deregulation that has taken place has forced certain barriers that existed in the market to come down. They had resulted in an efficient market and added costs for all Ontario gas consumers. With the changes being introduced to the legislation, these added costs should be eliminated, lowering prices again.

With the passage of this bill, Ontario gas producers would no longer be burdened with the extra costs created by an inefficient marketplace. Producers would have greater opportunities to be more competitive in the sale of gas in the Ontario market. Obviously as companies become more competitive, there would be greater opportunities there as well for investment and growth. There too you will see new jobs in aggregation, brokering and marketing of natural gas. The legislation modernizes the regulation of natural gas and removes market barriers so that that industry can evolve, creating jobs and investment. What's particularly encouraging is that this is not a bill that has seen a lot of partisan assaults from any quarter. In fact, we've seen a lot of bipartisan supportive comments that have come throughout the hearings held by the select committee and the comments by the opposition members here in this chamber.

Maybe even more exciting than that is the knowledge that even the Power Workers' Union, which five or 10 years ago might have been seen as the biggest enemy to change, have proven those naysayers wrong. They have proven the sceptics wrong. In fact John Murphy, the president of the Power Workers' Union, who was with us here in the chamber on the day the bill was brought forward, has said they're not going to worry about losing their jobs or their successor rights or their pension plans. In fact, as you are no doubt aware, the union itself has proposed an investment in one of the nuclear plants. They want to be a new provider of electricity.

What could be of greater comfort to the people watching, to the people looking at the impact of this bill and

wondering which direction pricing and job creation will take than to know that the union members working for Hydro themselves really believe that this is a step forward. They have expressed a commitment to work with Hydro, to work with the government and to find new ways of investing pension money to achieve not only job security but a greater financial reward for their own members. I think that's very exciting, and I think it's long overdue that we put in place an environment where the workers can step forward, where the monopoly, once broken, will allow access to anyone who wants to come up with a new idea, implement new technology, provide new financial resources. The competition is going to be marvellous, and the results will be equally significant, because the projections we have heard in the last few weeks range from 5% to as high as 20% reduction in the price of electricity that can be expected once the competition takes hold.

The other important aspect to be remembered is that there is a very steady pace to the implementation of the changes we're proposing in this bill. Over the next year, we'll continue to debate this issue, we'll move to create the two new companies which will take control of Ontario Hydro's existing assets and we'll give the local municipal electrical utilities time to analyse their place in the market and determine what role they want to play. Some will get larger, some will merge; all of them will meet the test of what is best for their local market and for their local customers.

By the year 2000, having had that slow and measured pace, but a very sure pace, we'll be in a position to reap the incredible benefits, the significant rewards that come from competition. In every other area that the government has broken up monopolies and has encouraged the involvement of the private sector or other investors, we have seen an increase in jobs, we have seen a lowering of prices. Natural gas is already well into that cycle; in fact, we have members in this chamber who have a background in that industry who could speak far more eloquently than I on that topic, but there is no doubt that across Ontario consumers have saved tens, indeed hundreds of millions of dollars since the first steps towards natural gas deregulation were taken.

Imagine, then, a product far more prevalent in the households across Ontario. Almost every home, save perhaps for a few cottages and hunting camps, every single resident, every single business in Ontario is an electricity customer. The bottom line is that if the savings in natural gas are in the tens and hundreds of millions, looking out over the next decade, taxpayers in Ontario could expect to save hundreds of millions to billions in reduced costs of a commodity we all have to buy, to rely on our modern accommodations and survive in an increasingly high-tech world.

This bill is merely the next step forward in an agenda of the last three years, a commitment to honour our election promises, to create jobs, and not just any jobs but top-quality jobs, jobs that this government will be very proud to recognize in years to come as having rebuilt the found-

dation of what was once the strongest economy in Canada and, I believe we can say, has become again.

We're not there yet, but this bill takes us an important step closer to our goal of making sure that everyone in this province who wants a job will find a job, and that every business that invests in this province will have the lowest cost of operation when compared to any other province, any other jurisdiction in North America.

They won't just have the lowest income tax rates; their staff won't just pay the lowest personal income tax rates; they won't just see relief in things like the employment health tax and other job-killing taxes like that — they're going to enjoy far lower electricity rates.

Many of us remember the days not that long ago when Ontario could boast having the cheapest electricity rates in North America. That day will come again, I have every confidence, and this bill is a guarantee of that.

2110

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): Normally I like to listen to the member for Scarborough East because I learn something from him, but today I've got some questions. He's saying he's got exciting news. He's excited about Hydro being split up. Nirvana is around the corner —

Mr Gilchrist: It is.

Mr Ruprecht: He says it is. Nirvana's around the corner with this bill, 160 pages of questions. He's echoing the Minister of Energy of course who says, "We know it's a recipe for lower prices in every jurisdiction."

Let's listen to the chair of Ontario Hydro. What does the chair, Mr Farlinger, say about this? Let me quote something from the Toronto Star. Do you know what the chair says about lowering prices, and you have to address yourself to that fact: "Nobody really knows what the price of power is going to be when competition comes in. His story will tell you that the price comes down, but that's a leap of faith." In short, he says, "We don't know." Is it going to go up? Is it going to go down? We don't know. Nirvana is not around the corner.

Furthermore, you've heard some members discussing this before, but you have not addressed that fact. Bob Lake, who is the president of the Municipal Electric Association, representing 276 non-profit electric utilities, says, "There will not be true competition, my friends, in the short term because the new generating company will only supply 93% of the province's power." In short, it is clear that prices may not come down. I don't know where he gets the idea from that it is Nirvana and that he's got some exciting news.

Furthermore, the second question you don't address yourself to is the whole idea of the provincial debt, the debt to Hydro. If you want some quotes here, you can find very quickly that the debt is at least, according to some statistics or to some of those who study this issue, \$35 billion. There will be more —

The Speaker: Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr Len Wood: In response to the Conservative member who spoke for the last 20 minutes, this is privatization by the back door. We don't know if it's going to happen in

a year, two years or three years down the road, but it's privatization by the back door.

We don't have any assurances other than a bill that is brought in here, 160 pages, and there are going to be a few days of public hearings in August. I'm sure that even by that time we're not going to have the answers from the Minister of Finance who has been designated as the person who's going to have to be responsible for figuring out how much debt there is out there on Ontario Hydro and how it's going to be paid. Is it going to be put on the tax bill of the residences and small businesses that are paying hydro rates or are there going to be other ways of doing it? We've asked all these questions and we continue to ask the questions. Is it a matter of Mike Harris trying to get another one of his election promises behind him before he calls a snap election? We're not sure about that either. Are we headed for an election in September before we see the disastrous results in health care and education? I'm sure you realize yourself, Mr Speaker, that when you're shutting down 35 or 40 hospitals in Ontario and closing schools all over the province, a mess is being created in being created and is it a way of going into privatization through the back door so that the residential consumers there are going to pay through the nose for higher hydro rates as a result of privatization?

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): It's interesting to listen to the various reactions to the member for Scarborough East, but I think both members opposite probably missed the key point and the key point here is, what are the prospects coming out of the Energy Competition Act and what will be the positive impacts of that legislation in succeeding years?

It's not long ago, about two years ago, that I think we heard from members opposite the refrain: "Where are the jobs? Where are the jobs?" Now that the jobs are coming because of many of the structural improvements we've made, that's part of the answer that is going to respond to the question on the members opposite asked two years ago or a year ago on that refrain.

There is no doubt that if you keep the same structure of an Ontario Hydro monopoly that you have today, you are going to face severe critical problems in the new millennium because all you've got to do is open your mind and look around you, members opposite, in terms of what's happening in the electrical business in the rest of North America.

What is happening there? There's competition. How it's coming about is different in different states of the U.S. It's different in other parts of the world, but the key fact is that you have to open up your markets and this piece of legislation will do that. Out of that particular application, electrical industry but on the supply side of the industry. What I mean by that is in things like geothermal information systems, tons of jobs coming about in computerization. Members opposite should be welcoming that, not screaming it.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Sergio: I am allowed to speak? I can make more comments? It's already had two minutes.

The Speaker: I know, but there are four questions and comments that you can make.

Mr Sergio: I'll make the two minutes then, Mr Speaker, and then I'll make my five minutes. Is that okay?

The Speaker: What do you mean your five minutes?

Interjections.

Mr Sergio: That's what I'm saying.

The Speaker: Yes, you can't do two.

Mr Sergio: No.

The Speaker: Questions and comments? Response.

Mr Gilchrist: To the members for Parkdale, Cochrane

North and Etobicoke-Rexdale, thank you very much for

your responses. I don't think there's any doubt, to the

member for Parkdale, that we certainly do have to wrestle

with the issue of the debt, but it exists today and I don't

think it's appropriate for anyone in this chamber to play

any kind of a shell game with people.

The reality is that the taxpayers in Ontario have guar-

anteed that debt. We're on the hook, you, me and I mil-

lion other people. The issue before us now is, how do we

prevent the system from ever adding more debt, bundling

even more debt on to the backs of existing Ontarians and

future generations? You have every right to be concerned

about the future of that debt, but I will guarantee you that

the prospect of greater competition, the prospect of a more

efficient Ontario Hydro, once it's separated into two new

components, will guarantee a far greater likelihood of a

profitable operation.

2120

You also talked about the percentage savings. I recall,

were, the and sporting goods chain, when they moved into

British Columbia for the first time, back in the late 1970s,

did a survey in communities such as Kellowna and Pentic-

ton of the price of a representative basket of goods before

and after their stores opened. The impact, even in a mar-

keplace that already had some suppliers, was a net reduc-

tion of 12%. That was the impact of one company being

added to the competition. As I mentioned in my comments,

in the United States we've seen 400 new energy providers

open up shop.

The reality is, the last word probably should go again

to John Murphy: "There's no reason we shouldn't see the

benefits of a competitive environment." Mr Murphy

believes there'll be lower prices. The government believes

that. You're going to see it.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Sergio: I am going to split the remaining nine min-

utes with the member for Parkdale. Whatever is left of the

time, 10 minutes —

The Speaker: That's fine.

Mr Rupprecht: Make it 10.

Mr Sergio: Make it 10. We'll take whatever is left.

The Ontario Hydro monopoly as we now know it may

end by the year 2000, but the question everyone must be

asking nowadays is if the customer will be served better when that happens.

As we have said, we did give some approval in prin-

ciple, because we don't fear competition. I think we are

open to competition. We are open to healthy competition.

We have no problem when private enterprises make a

profit, provided they deliver good service at a fair price to

the customers, to the citizens of Ontario.

What the bill says in its heading, always under the

pretence of "to create jobs and protect consumers" and

stuff like that, well, it couldn't be anything more — if I

were to say misleading, I would be out of place, but it's

something that doesn't really relate to the fact, because

when you go into private companies, you are eliminating

jobs. When private people take over, they do not have the

control that we now have. Therefore the jobs may be gone

and may even be less. So the heading is something on its

own here.

Let's address, very quickly, a couple of points in the

bill itself. It's all done in glory to split the corporation,

divide it, and hopefully offer it to the highest bidder. What

is that before the government does that, we have to spend

some \$6 to \$8 billion to put it in a very healthy condition

and then we are going to sell it. The fact remains, and this

has been addressed by previous speakers, we have some

\$30 billion to \$40 billion of debt in Ontario Hydro. Yes,

we have it now, but we're going to pass it along. So this

will have to be dealt with. How is it going to be dealt

with? Eventually somebody will have to pay it, and evi-

dently it's going to be the Ontario taxpayer. That is

something that is not anywhere in the legislation we are

debating now.

Actually, there is nothing in the legislation with respect

to this transition. The only thing that is in this particular

piece of legislation is the creation of this new authority

called the Ontario Hydro Financial Corp, which is in the

hands of, and is controlled by, the provincial government,

and that's where the money is being paid.

Other than that, there is absolutely nothing whatsoever

that would control the private corporations, which will

have total power. They will have massive powers to regu-

late themselves, to create rates, to issue licences. Under

what conditions? There are no conditions, because there is

legislation missing. There is no legislation which directs

those corporations later on in the future about the condi-

tions under which they would issue those licences and

consumers of Ontario.

I would say that, as we have seen in the past, bills are

provided and introduced in this House incomplete. Then

we have a bundle of amendments coming later on with not

enough input. Now we have at least five minutes to ad-

dress this particular piece of legislation. Come Monday,

the government may say, "We're going to curtail it; we're

going to close it," introduce closure, and there we go

again. As we have seen in the last two or three weeks,

they have introduced closure on two or three bills and now

I hear they're introducing closure to cut debate on the new

lection bill as well.

Mr Len Wood: They're trying to muzzle everybody.

Mr Sergio: Absolutely.

We have seen what's happening with the gas brokers.

There are a lot of people out there being taken for a ride.

being abused by these individual companies, and I don't

want to see the same thing happening with Ontario Hydro.

Let's not forget one thing: It belongs to the people of

Ontario. We owe it to them to see that whatever is done

here today is done with them in mind, and if and when

Ontario Hydro is split, we will offer enough protection

that they will continue to have delivery, they will continue

to have service and they will continue to have provision of

affordable, quality power from their Ontario Hydro.

Having said that, I'm already over the limit and I want

to give my colleague the remaining few minutes.

Mr Ruprecht: I just wanted to remind you, do you

know what happened in the 1960s? Do you remember that

Hydro tried to push hydro and power use into every home

in Ontario? They had a little jingle and the jingle went,

"Electrically heated homes into every place," or some-

thing like that. I can't emulate it too well. The point was,

"Use hydro as much as you possibly can, heat with hydro,

because it is cheapest." Do you know what happened?

Thousands upon thousands of residents of Ontario

changed their water heaters from gas to hydro because

hydro was cheaper.

Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie): From oil to

hydro, not gas.

Mr Ruprecht: That as well; some from oil and also

from gas, because it was cheaper than gas and certainly

cheaper than oil.

The fact is, and it goes beyond a shadow of a doubt,

that now you again have another change. You again have

thousands upon thousands of Ontario residents changing

their water heaters from electricity to gas. Why is that?

Because the power rates and the price of hydro have gone

up tremendously.

You will remember that every time a person changes

their water heater, it costs a lot of money. You know

The House adjourned at 2:30.

Monday.

The Speaker: Thank you. It now being 9:30 of the

clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock

"(5) The taxes the local distributor pays" —

"(4) The charges for transmission.

private, pays the generator.

"(3) The cost of energy your local distributor, public or

government

"(2) The taxes and charges that must be paid to the

"(1) The cost of generation from supplier.

of factors." What are those?

"There's no guarantee electric rates will be lower. The

price you will pay for electricity...will depend on a number

see what he says.

Here's the answer by an expert, Mr Andrew Frame. Let's

Let me simply say, in closing, will there be lower rates?

leap of faith, as Farlinger has indicated.

fact is that hydro rates are not going to go down. That is a

papers, we know that something is amiss. What's amiss

little jingles going on in the Spectator and other news-

I say to you, when you have these kinds of very funny

unaffordable.

them feel that hydro rates have gone so high as to become

especially to seniors, this has indeed happened. Many of

I wish to report a robbery in progress." To some of us,

man is reading the hydro meter. She says: "Hello, police?

making a phone call to the police while the hydro meter

here in the Hamilton Spectator. The cartoon has a woman

You know something? I'm looking at a little cartoon

deal?

Ontario, "This is a good deal." How can this be a good

bill's 160 pages, which are trying to tell the people of

they say, "We can write 300 pages of questions to this

the 160 pages. I agree with some previous speakers when

soon, too quick, too fast and ill-considered. Have a look at

Today we have another situation here with Bill 35. Too

wins.

payer of Ontario. It's non-productive to change from one

source of energy to another source of energy. Nobody

who's going to pay that? That is being paid by the tax-

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon Hillary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosières
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

[illegible]

Constituency	Member/Party	Circumscription	Député(e) / Parti	Member/Party	Député(e) / Parti
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Mississauga West / -Ouest	Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)	St Catharines-Brock	Freese, Tom (PC) Leach, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	St George-St David	Leach, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Nipissing		Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC) Mushinski, Marilyn (PC) Curling, Alvin (L) Brown, Jim (PC) Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) McLean, Allan K. (PC)	Scarborough North / -Nord	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
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Ottawa South / -Sud	Johnson, Bert (PC) Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Gravelle, Michael (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones
Oxford	Johnson, Bert (PC) Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Gravelle, Michael (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones
Parkdale	Johnson, Bert (PC) Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Gravelle, Michael (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones
Parr Sound	Johnson, Bert (PC) Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Gravelle, Michael (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones
Peterborough	Johnson, Bert (PC) Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Gravelle, Michael (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones
Port Arthur	Johnson, Bert (PC) Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Gravelle, Michael (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Johnson, Bert (PC) Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Gravelle, Michael (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones
Prince Edward-Lennox / Prince Edward-Lennox	Johnson, Bert (PC) Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Gravelle, Michael (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones
South Hastings / South Hastings	Johnson, Bert (PC) Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Gravelle, Michael (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones
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St Andrew-St Patrick	Johnson, Bert (PC) Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Gravelle, Michael (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones
S-D-G et Grenville-Est / S-D-G & East Grenville / Riverview	Johnson, Bert (PC) Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Gravelle, Michael (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Tom (PC) Hartick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs / procureur général, autochtones
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List arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

CONTENTS

Thursday 18 June 1998

SECOND READINGS

Energy Competition Act, 1998, Bill 35, <i>Mr Wilson</i>	1655, 1660
Mr Lessard	1655, 1660
Mr Maves	1659, 1663, 1671
Mr Colle	1659, 1664, 1668
Mr Len Wood	1659, 1667, 1668
1672, 1675	
Mrs Johns	1660, 1667, 1670
Mr Tascona	1660, 1664
Mr Sergio	1662, 1671, 1676
Mr Martin	1663, 1668, 1671
Mr Conway	1663, 1667
Ms Castelli	1666
Mr Gilchrist	1672, 1676
Mr Rupprecht	1675, 1677
Mr Hastings	1675
Debate deemed adjourned	1677

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeudi 18 juin 1998

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 1998 sur la concurrence dans le secteur de l'énergie, projet de loi 35, <i>M. Wilson</i>	1655, 1660
Mr Lessard	1655, 1660
Mr Maves	1659, 1663, 1671
Mr Colle	1659, 1664, 1668
Mr Len Wood	1659, 1667, 1668
1672, 1675	
Mrs Johns	1660, 1667, 1670
Mr Tascona	1660, 1664
Mr Sergio	1662, 1671, 1676
Mr Martin	1663, 1668, 1671
Mr Conway	1663, 1667
Ms Castelli	1666
Mr Gilchrist	1672, 1676
Mr Rupprecht	1675, 1677
Mr Hastings	1675
Débat présumé ajourné	1677



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of Ontario
Second Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 36^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 22 June 1998

Lundi 22 juin 1998



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 22 juin 1998

Monday 22 June 1998

*The House met at 1:30.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SPECIAL SERVICES AT HOME PROGRAM

Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East): This government promised that it would not cut funding to the disabled, I believe because most people feel that persons with special needs should have those needs met, without becoming destitute or suffering family breakdown. No one believes that parents of children with special needs should have to bear the extraordinary financial cost of caring for them alone.

That is why this government's denial of the de facto cutbacks to families receiving special services at home is so galling. The fact of the matter is that more families with disabled children have to compete with each other for a funding pool that remains at inadequate levels.

While he was in opposition, Mike Harris called for the special services at home budget to be doubled. Since becoming Premier, this government's funding to develop mental services has been cut by some \$50.4 million. By some strange logic, the minister responsible is somehow proud of restoring just \$1.5 million of that funding.

In four years, families needing support have grown from 9,000 to 13,000. Using simple math, it is clear that most families have had their support drastically reduced. What that means is that many families are on a waiting list or have the minimum of respite from the challenging needs of the disabled children, at great cost to their health and the needs of the rest of their family. This is an injustice that must not continue.

RIVERDALE HOSPITAL

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): As a result of the Harris government's decision to close by March 2000 the Riverdale Hospital, which is in my riding, more than 250 front-line staff have left their jobs. Many who remain must deal with new duties, lowered staffing levels and reduced wages. I want to congratulate the workers, none the less, for their continued hard work and dedication to the chronic care patients, some of whom have lived in that facility for a very long time.

our air clean.

A friendly competition will be involved, with workplaces getting points for the efforts of employees to keep

I want to take this opportunity to remind the honourable members of an important event taking place this week. It's the sixth annual Clean Air Commute Week. Pollution Probe deserves all our thanks for organizing Clean Air Commute Week as the main events of its Clean Air Campaign, which is supported by the Ministry of the Environment.

In April, I had the opportunity to attend the launching of an innovative new air quality program, Partners in Air, at Monsignor Johnson High School in my riding of Etobicoke-Rexdale. I was very impressed with the understanding the students have about air quality issues, not to mention their enthusiasm for finding solutions.

Smog also affects the economic life of Ontario by damaging crops, vegetation and our materials.

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Our government has given top and high priority to combating the increasingly serious problem of smog. It exacts a severe toll on our health. Its effects are most pronounced on those with respiratory ailments, as well as children and the elderly, all of which costs our health care system.

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GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

EVENTS IN SCARBOROUGH CENTRE

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): I'm very pleased to rise today to recognize two recent events involving the private sector that raised money for children's charities.

On May 6, I had the privilege to make Big Macs and French fries in my riding of Scarborough Centre for a worthy cause, McDonald's McHappy Day. I participated in McHappy Day events at the McCowan and Eglinton, Lawrence and Midland and Kingston and Ridgemoor locations of McDonald's. These locations helped to raise several thousand dollars for Ronald McDonald children's charities. In all, over \$3 million was raised across Canada.

I'd like to congratulate Terry Brazill and John and Louise Clark, the owner-operators of these McDonald's locations, and their staff for their efforts.

On May 27, the Tim Horton Children's Foundation held its annual Tim Horton Children's Camp Day to raise money for monetarily underprivileged children. The money raised from all coffee sales at Tim Horton's locations across Canada on that day went towards sending these children to camp. I had the privilege to participate in this very worthwhile cause at the Lawrence and Brimley location in my riding of Scarborough Centre.

Iqbal Roshd, the owner of three Tim Horton's in the Scarborough area, raised \$6,000 on Camp Day. I'd like to congratulate him and his staff for their outstanding efforts in making our community a better place to live.

Whether it's making hamburgers or serving a cup of coffee, these individuals and their customers deserve to be recognized.

I'd also like to recognize the men and women who have chosen Ontario and Canada to live from Polish Immigrant and Community Services in my riding of Scarborough Centre who are in the west public gallery. I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming them to the Legislature today.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): Today is the day we begin to Americanize our political process. The government is going to force closure on a draconian piece of legislation that will allow them to buy votes. The next election is going to be about money, it's going to be about power, it's going to be about abuse of money and abuse of power. It's about a government that's stacking the deck in its own favour. It's about a government that doesn't believe in debate. It's about a government that puts money ahead of people. It's about a government that has enough money to spend on health care propaganda but can't afford to hire nurses for our hospitals. It's about a government that has no compunction in hiring pollsters and letting the taxpayers subsidize that but won't provide adequate education funding for our schools and our children.

What's happening in this House today is yet another example of a government that's bound, set and determined

This latest piece of partisan propaganda cost the taxpayers of the province \$1.27 million. It claims to be delivering quality health care service to Ontario. I would say to the government, tell that to the people of Toronto, who are going to lose \$280 million and \$1.5 billion in hospital restructuring, or to the people in Ottawa, who are already out \$325 million and are going to lose another \$62 million next year, or to the London hospitals, which are going to lose \$290 million by the year 2006, or how about the Windsor-Essex hospitals, which are going to lose \$20 million by the year 2000?

We already know that the government is going to ram through, by way of unilateral decision, the new election finance expenses legislation, something that for the last 30 years has always been done on a consensus basis among all parties in the province.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): This past week Ontarians all over the province received the government's latest piece of propaganda material. This is at least the third time in the past three months that the government has used taxpayers' money to foster its own partisan, purely political propaganda. If it had been paid for by the Tory party, one could totally understand it, but this has been paid for by taxpayers' money.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I was interested to note today the release from the Ontario Alternative Budget Working Group, which shows again the true picture of what the government is doing with respect to spending, with respect to how they are reducing the deficit by reducing expenditures over the last three years. Some \$3.5 billion has actually been cut from spending. That's how Mike Harris is paying for his tax cut. That's how Mike Harris is dealing, in effect, with the situation in Ontario.

We are seeing example after example, which has been reiterated again in the budget statement from the Ontario Alternative Budget Working Group, an analysis which shows that, among other things, the government's total education spending for 1998-99 is about \$1 billion less than what it was for this time last year. It shows the kind of camouflage and doublespeak that the government continues to use, for example, trumpeting a lot about the \$120 million going into tourism promotion for the next four years, which is \$30 million a year, but of course forgetting to talk about the \$67 million in cuts that the tourism budget has taken this year. Similarly with respect to the summer jobs for youth program: The \$50 million announced by the government was trumpeted, but of course they forgot to mention that it was actually \$5 million less than was allocated two years ago.

Example after example shows the real cuts that are going on in our system, that people are feeling each and every day in their lives.

Emancipation Day, as Rosemary Sadlier of the Ontario Black History Society will affirm, is a time for all Canadians to reflect on our national heritage in terms of the historical struggle against slavery and racism. It's a time to celebrate the notable achievements of the past, the historic freedoms and protections that we enjoy as citizens of the Dominion of Canada subject to the crown; the triumph of the human spirit which is the underground railroad; the more-than-300-year heritage of Canada's black community; and our unshakable commitment to the ideals and visions of multiculturalism in contemporary Canadian society.

The Emancipation Day Act, at both the provincial and federal levels, will also celebrate the heroes, both past and present, who fought for human rights such as Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

I hope everyone will support this bill. Let us finally give Emancipation Day royal assent during this, the 30th anniversary of Dr King's martyrdom.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

WEST LAMBTON ELECTRIC COMMISSION ACT, 1998

Mr Boushy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill P-8, An Act to establish the West Lambton Electric Commission.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

EMANCIPATION DAY ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 SUR LE JOUR DE L'ÉMANCIPATION

Mr Jim Brown moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act proclaiming Emancipation Day / Projet de loi 46, Loi proclamant le jour de l'émancipation.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West): This bill designates August 1 as Emancipation Day to commemorate the abolition of slavery in the British Empire.

Emancipation Day marks the formal destruction of the institution of slavery. It was celebrated by Canadians throughout the 19th century, especially by ex-slaves who arrived in Canada on the underground railroad.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): My

colleague from Hamilton East introduced a bill on June 10 that would have the effect of finally bringing to a conclusion the question of restructuring in Hamilton-Wentworth.

We all know what the right thing to do is. The government knows what the right thing is in terms of immediate restructuring. The opposition members know what the proper thing to do is. Even at the risk of taking the Harris government off the hook, the opposition members are prepared to make sure that this gets the priority that it should. But not the government. The government has said that Hamilton-Wentworth is not important. An outraged Bob Morrow, in reacting to the minister's refusal to act, said that Hamilton taxpayers are being abandoned by the Harris government. "Hamilton is being unfairly penalized because of this inaction at Queen's Park."

What is so important in this place right now that the minister can't deal with the real needs that we have in Hamilton-Wentworth? He's got to ram through a brand-new elections act to make sure they can take care of their corporate pals and set up the next election. He's got to make sure that he rams through anti-labour legislation that will effectively cripple the construction industry in the province of Ontario. Both of these get absolutely no public hearing, and the time we're using in this House is so that he can ram that anti-democratic legislation through. In the meantime, Hamilton-Wentworth sits unattended to — services to be cut, taxpayers to pay more money. It's your fault, Minister, and it's unacceptable.

Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West): Today I will be introducing a bill entitled An Act proclaiming Emancipation Day. Emancipation Day marks the formal destruction of the institution of slavery in the British Empire. It was celebrated by Canadians off and on throughout the 19th century, especially by ex-slaves who arrived in Canada on the Underground Railroad. In 1793, however, about 50 years prior to the British imperial act banning slavery, Ontario's first Lieutenant Governor, John Graves Simcoe, brought in legislation that began the process of dismantling slavery in this country.

d'Ivoire to Canada, accompanied by Mr Peter Dawes, honorary consul general in Toronto, and Rosic, of course.

1350

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Today another damning report has been released about your atrocious record as Minister of the Environment and your government's atrocious record in protecting Ontario's environment. The report put out by the Canadian Institute for Environment and Policy, which is in front of you, which you have seen and which was sent to you on Friday, talks at length about how you have sold out to polluters in this province.

Among the information: Since 1995, when you took office, fines for corporate polluters have gone from over \$3 million in 1995 to less than \$1 million in 1997. You have said over and over again that the enforcement branch of your ministry has not been cut. Again you were wrong. This report makes it clear that 27 staff members have been cut from the enforcement branch since 1995, so either you're telling us the truth or they have been sucked up into some big black hole inside your ministry, because they're not out there enforcing the environmental standards in this province.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question.

Mr Agostino: Minister, you're playing footsie with polluters in this province. Can you tell us today what you're going to do to improve enforcement in Ontario, to beef up the standards and to go after polluters —

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I think it's realistic to expect that certain environmental groups are uncomfortable with the changes that our government is making. However, we believe that those changes are for the good.

Of some of the issues which the member opposite has raised, I would point out to him that yes, the total amount of fines has declined in this province, but that's because we have changed the method of doing business in Ontario, the method of complying with environmental laws. We are preventing offences from occurring by issuing firms which are undertaking various matters in this province; we're issuing them orders before the offence takes place. We believe that's much more progressive, in terms of preventing the pollution before it starts, rather than fining and taking somebody to court after it has taken place.

Mr Agostino: What an absolutely ridiculous response from the minister who's in charge of taking care of the environment in this province. Forget the environmental groups. Christina Blizzard, who is not part of an environmental group, who has been kind to your government, said

Mr Hoy moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 47, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to protect children while on school buses / Projet de loi 47, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en vue de protéger les enfants lorsqu'ils sont dans des autobus scolaires.
The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.
Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent): This bill addresses the long-standing need to protect Ontario's school children. It would provide a conviction mechanism for a vehicle that illegally passes a school bus with its red warning lights flashing.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ON SCHOOL BUSES ACT, 1998 LOI DE 1998 SUR LA PROTECTION DES ENFANTS DANS LES AUTOBUS SCOLAIRES

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:
To the Lieutenant Governor in Council —
The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): You need consent to move it. Let's get consent.
Hon Mr Sterling: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:
To the Lieutenant Governor in Council:
We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the appointment of Ann Cavoukian as the Information and Privacy Commissioner for a term of five years, commencing on July 1, 1998, as provided in section 4 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1987, chapter 25, and

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.
motion carry? Carried.
I would like to take this opportunity of not only congratulating you, but also introducing you to Ms Cavoukian in the Speaker's gallery right now.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce to the members of the Legislative Assembly, in the Speaker's gallery, His Excellency Jean Obeo-Coulibaly, ambassador of Côte-

on the weekend that you basically should step aside and as Minister of the Environment. She is not aligned with any environmental groups. It goes on and on.

Minister, you have cut more regulations than anyone else before you. You have cut more staff than anyone else before you. Clearly, having you as Minister of the Environment is like putting Colonel Sanders in charge of the chicken coop. No one in Ontario can any longer trust you or trust your role as the chief guardian of Ontario's environment. Since you seem incapable of committing to any kind of improvement in regulations or enforcement, will you, again, today commit to beef up the enforcement branch to send out a clear message to your ministry that they are responsible and should go after polluters, or will you continue to stand aside and allow polluters to run the day in Ontario and destroy the health and safety of Ontarians through your lack of action?

Hon Mr Sterling: As I mentioned in my previous response, our government is targeting industries to prevent pollution incidents before they occur or start.

I also want to indicate to the members opposite, notwithstanding that the amount of money we have collected from going through court procedures has fallen, the number of convictions has increased under this government. In other words, notwithstanding the fact that we have become more efficient in our process, the number of convictions has gone up while we have been able to do our processes much more effectively. That is not mentioned in this particular environmental report, but it is the truth.

Mr Agostino: I find the contradiction in your answers amazing. Earlier you said, "While we're working with them to prevent them from causing a problem, we'll lay charges," and that was the excuse why the amount of money has gone down. Now you're saying the number of charges has increased. You can't have it both ways here.

It gets worse. On June 2 you posted on the environmental registry notice of future deregulations of the waste industry in Ontario. You did not learn from the Plastimet fire. What was clear this morning was that your proposed deregulations of June 2 are going to make it easier for storage or movement of PCBs, for storage of hazardous waste, for storage of plastics.

As it continues, you are now proposing regulations that would weaken what is already there, and what caused Plastimet and will cause other similar disasters across Ontario. You have destroyed the work done by governments before you. You have destroyed the foundation that was set by Premier Davis and his government in regard to environmental protection.

Minister, you don't give a damn about the environment in this province. You've abandoned all of your responsibilities. Will you today do the responsible thing, hand in the keys to the limo and allow a minister to take your place who cares about the environment and is committed to environmental protection?

Hon Mr Sterling: It's hard to know where to start in response to such a vacuous question which stabs out in

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): My question is to the Minister of Health and it concerns hospital and related health expenditures in various communities across Ontario. Minister, I paid particular attention in recent days to the dialogue between yourself and my colleague Mr Kennedy, the member for York South. I want to pursue this line of questioning with you today.

When I look at my home city of Pembroke, it is very clear from your own data — ministry data and data from after all the restructuring and reinvestments have been made, we in the city of Pembroke will lose on an annual basis about \$6.5 million to \$7 million in terms of health budget. That's the reality in Pembroke according to your data. Will you confirm that cities like Toronto, London, Hamilton, Ottawa and Windsor, to name but a half dozen other cities, will from this day well into the first decade of the next century have fewer health and hospital dollars to spend on services than they had when you took office but three years ago?

Hon Mr Sterling: It's unfortunate the opposition doesn't want to hear what the real truth is about this.

The Speaker: Come to order, members. I want to hear the minister's response.

Hon Mr Sterling: I should read what this same organization said about the Liberal government in 1990. They stated that the Liberal Ontario government "has spent more than \$40 million but has done little to keep a four-year-old promise that would clean up the province's water." That's what they said about you. What they say about me is perhaps relevant, perhaps irrelevant.

We have done a great deal in this province to improve the environmental laws. We have brought forward laws and regulations which needed reamending, which were 20 years out of date because of the inaction of previous governments. We're proud of what we have done.

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Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): As the member knows, this government has indicated that health care is a priority. It's a priority for people in the province of Ontario. When we were elected we said that we would not decrease health care funding. We were spending \$17.4 billion, and today we have indicated, and certainly the budget figures confirm, that we are presently spending \$1.2 billion more. We will be spending \$18.6 billion. We are doing this despite the fact that the federal government reduced our transfer payments by almost \$2 billion.

So certainly people in the province of Ontario are continuing to receive excellent health care. We are reforming the system and we are providing a continuum of care for people in this province.

1400

Mr Conway: Minister, accepting that you will spend \$18.6 billion — but God knows, given the accounting of the dollars — but accepting that this is what you're going to spend this year, and noting that you'll make substantially increased investments and health spending in the Metro belt, the so-called 905 area, accepting those two realities, will you stand in your place today and confirm that cities like Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, London, Windsor, and yes, my home city of Pembroke, will for years to come be receiving substantially fewer hospital- and health-related dollars than was the case when you took office three years ago?

Hon Mrs Witmer: The member knows that last week his own hospital, Pembroke General Hospital, received an additional \$1 million from the Ministry of Health.

I think what we all need to keep in mind is that as we restructure the health system in Ontario we're talking about providing a continuum of care. That starts, obviously, with prevention, it starts with primary care, it includes the hospital sector and, most important, there is the additional focus now on providing the community supports. That includes the long-term-care facilities and the community care services.

Recently we indicated that over the next eight years we would be investing an additional \$1.2 billion into long-term-care facilities and services, simply because there had been no awarding of new long-term beds since 1988.

Mr Conway: The minister is right. On Friday her colleague Mr Jordan delivered a \$1-million cheque to the Pembroke General Hospital.

Intjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order.

Mr Conway: However, Saturday's Pembroke General Hospital is now only \$3 million in debt. The Pembroke General Hospital, in the one community where a hospital has actually closed, is in the worst financial shape in its 100-year history, largely because of restructuring.

My final question is this: Given the dire straits in which so many hospitals outside of the 905 area find themselves, how is it possible that you and your colleagues in the Harris government would find \$1.25 million to print and distribute this pamphlet, representing one of the most shamelessly transparent bits of partisan politics I've ever seen? How is it that you've got \$1.25 million worth of government money to invest in this kind of propaganda and you've got no money to assist with hospitals that are crying out for help as they sink under the weight of multimillion-dollar deficits?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As I've said on many occasions, and as most members of this House know, for the public and number one issue of interest is health. This household, which was distributed to the people in Ontario, is an opportunity for the public to be informed about the

health initiatives that have been undertaken. It also serves as a reminder to make sure that you have a health card. It allows an opportunity for the public to respond with input and it also asks for additional information. The public has been saying to us: "We need to know. We want to know what's going on. We want to have an opportunity to provide, and get involved in, a dialogue." We believe this household is a means of sharing information with the public and receiving good input.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms Marilyn Churley (Rivdale): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, another week goes by and there is yet another report condemning you and your government's destruction of environmental protection in this province. You had the gall to stand there last week, and again today, and say that your government has the most progressive environmental record in 10 years. Just because you say it over and over again doesn't mean that it reflects reality. Believe me, you're the only one who thinks this.

Yesterday was another bad-air-quality day. There were elevated levels all over the province. Scarborough's air-quality index was 59; Mississauga, 55; Etobicoke South, 49; downtown Toronto, 51; and London, 50. Up to 32 is acceptable and above 50 is considered poor. Minister, it's going to be a very long, hot summer and your government has done absolutely nothing to protect our air. When somebody dies from a smog-related illness, does anybody in your government give a damn?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): It's unfortunate that the member opposite has taken this approach. We are very concerned with the air quality of the greater Toronto area. We have taken some steps with regard to cleaning up the air in Ontario. Unfortunately, high-air-quality-index days are caused by a combination of weather factors from south of us. I must say that during our period of time in government, we have done more about addressing air quality problems than has been done in the previous 20 years, as was pointed out to us early in our term by the Provincial Auditor.

Ms Churley: I would like to know what substance you're abusing, because I sure would like to have some of it. You're out of touch with reality. It's a free ride for corporate polluters in Mike Harris's Ontario. We've learned in your recent ministry —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): That's very unparliamentary and I ask the member to withdraw it.

Ms Churley: I withdraw that.

We've learned in your recent ministry reorganization that you've eliminated the conservation and prevention division. It's clear that prevention isn't a priority with this government. We've just learned this. You've slashed enforcement of environmental regulations. It's no wonder that fines for breaking environmental laws in Ontario are at their lowest level in 10 years. Since 1995, the fine total has dropped by two thirds, and you're not involved in any

prevention. You're going after small-time offenders and you're letting off the biggest corporate polluters. Why? Because you don't have the technical expertise any more to prosecute serious offences against the environment that affect our health.

Minister, your idea of environmental protection is to simply ask corporate polluters to stop dumping toxic waste into our air and our water. This is unacceptable. When are you going to get it? The public wants clean air, clean land and clean water.

Hon Mr Sterling: We have been doing a great deal

with regard to the issues mentioned by the member opposite. As members in this Assembly know, we are in the throes of implementing a vehicle emissions testing program for the province which will include more cars, more trucks and more buses than any other jurisdiction in North America. This is a program which is going to be introduced in a careful manner, because it's very difficult to ensure that it's done fairly and without fraud and gets the reductions we are aiming for in order to improve our air quality.

We started from a great deficit with regard to air quality in this province when we took over the government, and we are doing everything we can to catch up with what we should have been doing maybe five or 10 years ago with regard to air quality in Ontario.

1410

The Speaker: Final supplementary. The member for

Hamilton Centre.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):

Minister, time and time again we have persisted in demanding, on behalf of the people of Hamilton, that you call a public inquiry into the Hamilton Plastimet fire. Now we learn that just 20 days ago, on June 2, you placed on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry a draft regulation that will repeat and expand the very mistakes that led to the Plastimet fire, not only that, but your draft legislation goes against the Plastimet recommendations of the Ontario fire marshal.

This broadens the exemption for recycling and hazardous waste sites that helped to create the whole Plastimet situation. Recycling facilities like Plastimet will now have even weaker controls under your new regulations, and you have the nerve to say you're strengthening environmental protections? The public wants you to strengthen, not weaken regulations so situations like Plastimet won't happen.

When are you going to get it? When are you going to at least follow the recommendations of your own fire marshal? When will you ensure that no other innocent community like Hamilton faces a Plastimet fire and call a public inquiry?

Hon Mr Sterling: There's a clear distinction between the responsibilities of the fire code and the ministry's responsibilities for environmental problems. I believe my ministry has reacted in an exemplary way with regard to the Plastimet fire. I have, however, said to the city of Hamilton and the regional municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth that if they want to inquire into a matter which

is primarily a matter dealing with why this particular fire started, they have every right to call a public inquiry. I have offered my assistance to them with regard to carrying this through, because I know, because of all the stories and all of the outcome with regard to this, that there have been a lot of questions by the people.

We have concentrated our efforts on providing information to the public about what happened at the fire and also cleaning up the site. We have taken full responsibility for that, notwithstanding the city of Hamilton's reluctance to do so, long before this incident ever happened.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): My question is to the Chair of Management Board. Last Thursday, my leader and I held a news conference that proved once and for all that your attempt to buy the next election wasn't a product of the all-party process; it was dreamed up by the whiz kids in the Premier's office. We found 23 major changes that were not recommended by the election finances commission. Your increase in central spending by \$1.3 million wasn't recommended by the commission, your shortening of the campaign period from 37 to 28 days wasn't recommended by the commission, your massive increase in corporate tax breaks for political donations wasn't recommended by the commission, and yet you persist in telling everyone that these recommendations did come from the commission when we know they didn't.

At the very least, as a sign of good faith, will you accept our amendments that remove at least those recommendations that were not part of the election finances commission recommendations?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): The member of the third party knows full well that this is an issue that has been around for a number of years. There have been two all-party agreements dating back to 1991 and 1994. The act itself hasn't been updated in 12 years.

He's right that the election finances commission, which had as its chair your past party president, and two representatives from your party, two from the Liberals and two from the Conservatives, recommended that total spending, both riding and the party, be \$1.80. We took the Liberal written position that said they wanted the same as the federal, which brings it down to \$1.56. As far as leader and tour expenses and polling go, those are the present rules. They were recommended by the commission to be excluded. The only time they have been included was during the 1995 period. Prior to that they were excluded, and after 1996, they have been excluded. That was part of their report.

You're right that we didn't take some of the recommendations. We decided to have a blackout period at the beginning of the campaign because we thought that sounded fairer than what was recommended.

Mr Christopherson: Let's just take a look at one

small change that's included in those 23 recommendations that aren't part of the commission's recommendations. Sections 17.1 and 17.3 let a political party pay for a special revision of the voters' list and then get exclusive use of that list. We always thought here in terms of fairness that election officials should provide the same level of service to all the parties, and not special service to those who have rich friends. You're creating a two-tier election process. If you have more money, the commission will give you a better list; if you don't have that money, you get to use the old list. Minister, how does having a more up-to-date list for the rich and an older list for everybody else possibly help democracy?

Hon Mr Hodgson: First, I'd like to correct your pre-

amble. The recommendations from the election finances commission — you're right — did not recommend the abolishment of their commission, but the chief election officer made a recommendation and said we should be consistent with other provinces and not have a commission, which is a saving to the taxpayers of \$1 million a year.

The permanent voters' list and access to those lists are part of the chief election officer's report that you can abolish the commission, you can go to a permanent electors' list.

Mr Christopherson: I don't recall asking anything about abolishing the commission. My question was about sections 17.1 and 17.3.

Let's talk about what's going on here. You're attempting to buy the next election. That's what is going on. You've now introduced a motion that shuts down debate — no public hearings, no amendments, no discussion, just you and the Tories deciding what the rules are going to be for the next election.

Your Premier has said in the past that there won't be an election this year. There's no excuse at all why you can't

put this bill out for summer hearings. It doesn't take effect until January 1, 1999. There's not going to be an election this fall. Why, then, are you not allowing the public to have a say over the summer months and then bring the bill back in the fall to debate? Minister, stand up and defend such anti-democratic actions.

Hon Mr Hodgson: First, the last time I checked, I believe it's the Premier who calls the election, not the third party, and it's been the same in the history of party finances commission, said that you should give lots of time for these changes so that all those involved in elections have ample notice and know the rules on the level playing field.

Mr Christopherson: You can't answer my question.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Member for Hamilton Centre, come to order, Minister?

Hon Mr Hodgson: It would have been nice to have all-party agreement. They've had it twice since 1991. Your parties have rejected that. You set up an all-party committee to be at arm's length to report back. The

We couldn't take their recommendation — I don't know whether, by inference, you would go to the federal rules entirely, because you know that at the federal level there's no limit on donations. We feel that you should have limits on donations.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Minister of Health. At a time when your government has closed 35 hospitals in the province, when you've fired thousands of nurses out the doors of hospitals across Ontario, when there are long waiting lists to get access to home care and long-term care; when patients are still experiencing long waits at hospital emergency departments; when the level of care in hospitals has deteriorated seriously as a direct result of your enormous cuts to hospital operating funding; when you are dumping responsibility for public health and preventive health care programs on to cash-strapped municipalities; when you've stuck this cost with local government; at this very time you have over \$1 million of taxpayers' money to squander on a partisan political propaganda pamphlet to send to all residents of Ontario. Minister, when you and Mike Harris have inflicted so much damage on our health care system in Ontario, how can you justify the Ministry of Health throwing away \$1.27 million in Conservative propaganda pamphlets such as this?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): Our government is reforming the health care system in Ontario. That's why we have increased our health spending.

I know mention was just made of the fact that there have been some emergency room overcrowding problems. As members of this House well know, in response to the task force on the emergency room situation, our government did respond and indicate that once and for all we were prepared to deal with the issue of the emergency room situation. We did announce that we would be investing \$225 million to ensure that all people coming into emergency rooms could be treated as quickly as possible. In fact, contained within that announcement was our response that we would temporarily ensure that 1,700 long-term-care beds would be available to deal with people who were in acute care beds and should be accommodated elsewhere.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer.

Hon Mrs Witmer: It's exactly as a result of the fact that we have made changes to the health care system that we are distributing this —

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Mr Bradley: It seems that Mike Harris is Mr Scrooge when it comes to spending money on hospital operating budgets and he's Santa when it comes to spending money on political propaganda pamphlets. The people of this province want money spent on health care services, not on partisan propaganda. I suspect the civil servants within the Ministry of Health must have had a difficult time stomachaching the fact that they would have to allocate \$1.270 million on political propaganda when they know the pressures there are for genuine health care services in this province.

Minister, at a time when you have all kinds of money to spend on these propaganda pamphlets, you are making cuts in very significant areas of service. Will you now ask the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario to reimburse your ministry, the Ministry of Health, for \$1.270 million that this propaganda pamphlet cost? Will you reimburse your Ministry of Health and will you direct that funding to health care services for the people of this province?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As I say, all governments, regardless of political stripe, have always tried to ensure that people in this province have access to information about new services, new initiatives. The Liberals, in 1989 to 1990, spent a total amount of \$43.5 million in advertising, and the NDP when they were in office, February 1995, actually spent \$6.6 million to advertise their new Smile Ontario health cards.

This householder, which is being distributed to communities and people across this province, is again an effort to keep the public informed, to make them aware of the changes that are taking place in health care, to introduce them to the new services. It also gives them an opportunity to provide input and also to ask for additional information. So this is another means of communicating with the public in this province.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. Last week we learned that Notre Developments corporation has been given conditional approval to use the old Adams mine as a giant dump for Toronto's garbage.

The Environmental Assessment Board decision doesn't cut it, Minister. Your government has compromised the assessment process to such an extent that the board didn't even consider alternatives to the dump. On top of that, you've taken away intervenor funding so that the voices of the community, people who might object to this proposal, can't be heard. You've tried to silence any opposition. Many concerns have been raised about 3Rs activities if Unfortunately, your flawed EA didn't even consider the alternatives, such as waste reduction. Will you overturn

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough-Eglinton): My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. From time to time in this House you've referred to a group known as Partners for Change. I'm wondering if you could provide a little bit more information on this particular program.

Hon Mr Sterling: As I said in my answer to the first question, I will consider this in light of the laws we have in the province. I will consider it carefully from the point of view of the Environmental Assessment Board's decision and take the very learned advice of my technical staff as to whether this undertaking should be approved.

Hon Mr Sterling: As I said in my answer to the first question, I will consider this in light of the laws we have in the province. I will consider it carefully from the point of view of the Environmental Assessment Board's decision and take the very learned advice of my technical staff as to whether this undertaking should be approved.

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The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Supplementary.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I have just received the Environmental Assessment Board's decision, where they approved the proposed leachate collection and containment system for the Adams mine landfill site. It's subject to a number of specific conditions that the undertaker would have to abide by. I'm in no position to comment further on the matter until my ministry has the opportunity to review it, and then I will be making my decision as to whether or not I would recommend the approval, in accordance with the Environmental Assessment Board's decision, to the cabinet.

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Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): Thank you for the question. Partners for Change is a model for partnership in Ontario. As we know, as we try to focus on the government's priorities for women — that is, safe communities, stopping the violence and women's economic independence — it's incumbent upon all of us to reach out to people who are volunteering, who are showing leadership in their own communities, who are dedicated to solving problems and creating solutions. We

look to them for their ideas and their encouragement and

their help.

Basically, we're looking at mentors, we're looking at

role models for young women, especially those women who want to become economically independent and be responsible, as far as possible, for their own lives. We're very grateful to those who have come forward in communities across the province to partner with us, to help us create an environment for finding solutions.

Ms Mushinski: Minister, in your answer you referred to joint partnership projects which Partners for Change hoped to use to promote women's issues that specifically relate to safe communities and women's economic independence. I have a number of women's groups in my riding of Scarborough-Eglsworth that are particularly interested in these two issues. I wonder if you could give us an example of some of the projects that this particular group is working on.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: This evening we will be launching one of our partnership projects which has already won major awards across our province. It's an unofficial release. Some weeks ago we learned about Women Entrepreneurs: Making a Difference. It's a 24-minute video that all of us will be able to use, and others in our communities in education in particular, which produces a positive impact on young people as they seek to become entrepreneurs. It focuses on the unique challenges faced by four women entrepreneurs.

It's basically with the spirit and leadership of Pixie Bigelow that we have this talent. She will go on, we hope, to produce even more videos that can be helpful to us as resources as we look for mentors and role models. Her next effort, I hope, will be to focus on young Canadian women entrepreneurs, and we're looking forward to ongoing support with our partners to create these opportunities.

1430

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): I want to pursue with the Minister of Health some information that we published last week with respect to hospital communities throughout Ontario. In Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, London, Ottawa, Toronto, and my home of Windsor, the government's total announcements to date in terms of hospital closures, emergency room closures and its so-called reinvestments have meant net cuts to all those communities in the tens of millions of dollars. In my own community the net cut has been \$46 million from operating budgets. Just so the minister understands, that means waiting in emergency rooms, that means delay in care, that means lack of home service, that means lack of long-term-care beds.

What will you do to address the shortfall in operating funding in my community that will cost us \$46 million every year? What will you do to assure my community that those hospitals will continue to be able to offer the

type of care that the people of my community deserve and ought to be able to expect?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): I see that there's a little bit of confusion. Sometimes we're using figures that are relating just to hospitals and other times we're bringing in community care services and long-term-care services. It's important that we recognize the fact that as we reform the system of health in Ontario, obviously we are going to be designating the dollars that are spent on health — which, I have said before, is more than a \$1.2 billion increase since we took office — to the appropriate service so that people in this province can have access to the services they most need.

I think we need to recognize too, when we talk about hospitals, we know that today, for example, there is a need for fewer beds in hospitals because 70% of surgery is day surgery.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer.

Hon Mrs Witmer: To the member opposite, when we talk about Windsor, our government has invested in your community, Essex county —

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Mr Duncan: Your numbers are an absolute phoney disgrace. You're using propaganda instead of reality. By your own numbers, you are cutting —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. Order. Member for Windsor-Walkerville.

Mr Duncan: You are cutting \$46 million net, and that's after all your so-called reinvestments. That means our hospitals cannot provide the level of service they need to, even under your projections for the future. All the while you have time to spend \$1.2 million on useless propaganda that has nothing to do with informing the public. The people in my community know. They know because their emergency rooms are a disaster, they know because they can't access coronary care, they know because there are not enough home care services, they know because there are not enough long-term-care beds and there won't be until well into the next century.

What are you going to do? Instead of hiding and using propaganda and false statistics, will you commit to reinvesting that \$46 million not 10 years from now, but now, to ensure that the people —

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon Mrs Witmer: One of the things that we're not quite sure of is where some of these numbers that are being used from the party opposite are even coming from. I think it's absolutely essential, when we use information, that we at least base it on some fact. I have an example here of some of the information. Mr Kennedy says, for example, in the GTA-905 area the government gave \$29,212 in —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Minister?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As I said before, in terms of some of the numbers that are being thrown about, we're not quite sure where they're coming from. I would just refer to the fact that Mr Kennedy made a couple of comments, and

the reality of what was said and what actually happened are quite different.

The Speaker: Answer.

Hon Mrs Wilmer: GTA: He said government gave \$29,212. The reality is that the ministry invested \$3 million —

The Speaker: Thank you.

1440

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr David Christopheron (Hamilton Centre): My

question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, it's bad enough that your Bill 31 takes the Mike Harris attack on unions and workers to a new level, but it's absolutely unbelievable that you're doing this without any opportunity for anyone to have a say in what that law will be. You just introduced it 18 days ago, and with no public hearings and no amendments you're going to ram it through tomorrow night. In part of the bill, you pretended to negotiate with the construction trades, but then you betrayed them; on the rest of it, you met in secret with your corporate pals and didn't even meet with the people who represent the workers.

Last Thursday we saw 500 workers drop their tools in Sarnia because they were protesting, in the only way left, the legislation that's damning their livelihoods, Bill 31. Minister, why shouldn't workers respond to what happened in Sarnia all across the province, in light of what you're doing to workers' rights?

Interruption

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Clear the galleries. All of you, you've got to go, everybody in the gallery. You're all going, folks. Everybody in the gallery has got to be cleared.

Minister?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour, Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): Bill 31, if passed, would ensure that Ontario is competitive in the industrial sector in construction prices.

We have experienced a situation, particularly in Sarnia-Lambton, where unanimously has been required pursuant to the province-wide construction agreement, that 10 out of 12 trades have agreed and yet a project has not gone forward because of the absence of unanimity. This bill is designed to create a framework where 60% of the building trade unions could agree on a specific project, which would result in that project going ahead. That's good news for skilled workers in Ontario.

Mr Christopheron: Minister, you can take some small comfort from the fact that your colleagues and you were saved from the wrath of workers because they have been tossed out of this Legislature, but let me tell you, you get out on that election trail and you're not going to be able to run away from them. You're going to have to answer to these workers as to why you rammed through Bill 31, taking away their rights, lowering their wages, and you didn't give them one minute of opportunity to have a public say.

TELEMARKETING PRACTICES

Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West): I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. One of my constituents recently received a bingo card in the mail. It seemed to offer the opportunity of winning up to \$5,000. The only problem was that on the back, in the fine print, the person had to dial a 1-900 number that was going to cost \$4 a minute. That would mean that person would be spending \$24 to find out that they probably didn't win anything. Minister, what is your ministry doing to prevent these types of scratch-and-win scams from victimizing Ontario residents?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I'd like to thank the member for Scarborough West for the question. This is an issue of concern to me and our ministry. I have to tell you that we've seen several of these so-called contests crop up over the last year or so, and we are monitoring the situation very closely. In fact, just two months ago, last April,

introduced Thursday is good news for Sarnia-Lambton." All around the province they understand that this means good union jobs for the skilled workers of Ontario.

The Sarnia Observer said, "A new provincial bill more business and more jobs."

reported, "We would applaud the decision of the Progressive Conservatives to balance the rights of business with those of labour to ensure that the province will attract and create good union jobs in the province of Ontario.

The Timmins Daily Press reviewed the legislation and to the workers or to the New Democratic Party for helping 42,500 jobs to this province. I have no reason to apologize to the workers or to the New Democratic Party for helping agreements." That's for a very good reason, because this legislation has the potential, according to the Canadian Chemical Producers Association, to attract more than 42,500 jobs to this province. I have no reason to apologize to the workers or to the New Democratic Party for helping

Hon Mr Flaherty: It should be noted that the government relations director of the building trades council made it clear on June 5, "In principle, we've agreed with helping to attract investment to Ontario through project agreements."

ing to attract investment to Ontario through project agreements."

able to put through this phoney crisis as a shield. Make no mistake. Our party, if we form a government, will scrap Bill 31 in a heartbeat. Will you do the right thing and withdraw that bill now?

Mr Christopheron: My point in raising that is that the government can't have it both ways. You can't stand up and say you've got 92% of the construction jobs coming to this province, and then, on the other hand, say there's such a crisis in the construction industry that you've got no choice but to take away people's democratic rights and ram through legislation without giving them a say. It doesn't work that way, and you're not going to be

able to put through this phoney crisis as a shield. Make no mistake. Our party, if we form a government, will scrap Bill 31 in a heartbeat. Will you do the right thing and withdraw that bill now?

The Speaker: Stop the clock.

Interruptions

Ontario, yet you want us to believe —

In responding to a question last week, your Deputy Premier bragged about the fact that 92% of all construction jobs created in Canada were created right here in

who are seeking a bed in an emergency shelter. We don't want that to happen again. Minister, will you act immediately to establish a mental health agency, community-based, that will listen and respond to the needs of our community?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): Yes, I did actually communicate to people in your community, through your colleague in the neighbourhood riding, when the meeting was held just recently. I certainly am aware of the concerns they have. As you know, we have gone through changes in this province relating to mental health. Unfortunately, all previous governments had not put in place the appropriate community supports, so we have put a moratorium on the closing of psychiatric beds until such time as we can be assured that we have the appropriate community services in place to support the individuals who require the 24-hour care. Certainly I would say to you that we will move ahead in your community and ensure that the appropriate care is there for all the people who need it.

Mrs McLeod: We understand that the minister is not going to shut down beds until community support services are in place. I didn't get an answer to the question about how we're going to decide what community supports are needed. I can tell you that the answer that they're not going to shut down the hospital until supports are in place doesn't ease people's concerns about what's going to be left when the psychiatric hospital is gone or the beds are shut down.

Community services is too easy a catch-all and too many real people can fall through the cracks. One of the groups of people in our community that is falling through the cracks right now are people with acquired brain injuries. They are one of the groups mentioned in your \$1.2-million propaganda piece that went out across the province this week. Those people in our community are in psychiatric hospitals now in many cases because there's no place else for them, or they are in homes for the aged even though they are young, or they are in home settings where they're being cared for by stressed family members. There are only three individuals who are getting community-based support now in care settings; there are 47 people on the list.

Will you give me an assurance today, a guarantee, that there will be community placements available for all 47 people who are now on that waiting list with acquired brain injuries and for any others who need support in the future?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As you know, my predecessor, the Honourable Jim Wilson, undertook to bring all the acquired brain injury patients back to this province, because previous governments had determined that treatment would be provided in the States. We are going to be providing the appropriate level of services, not only to bringing people back but to ensure that these people that are presently in Ontario get and receive the level of treatment they need as well.

we issued a consumer advisory to make sure that people were aware of the scratch-and-win cards.

I'd also like to repeat that you can't win a contest you didn't enter. That's quite the norm with these things. What happens is that they send you a card. These are unsolicited cards. People must read the fine print on these just to make sure.

As the member indicated, most of these cards are marked as "winner," which is designed to induce the person to call the 1-900 number and get them to pay all kinds of money in phone charges, which goes right into the operator's pocket.

If it's something that's too good to be true, it is. Consumers who believe that some sort of prize is misleading should contact the ministry and certainly local law enforcement agencies.

Mr Jim Brown: I agree that consumer alerts and educational campaigns are a good start, but what stronger measures can your ministry put in place to stop this?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: We have worked on a very important initiative, along with the minister responsible for seniors issues. We've worked together on an initiative called Phonebusters. Phonebusters is really the brainchild of Sergeant Barry Elliott of the OPP.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: It's interesting that they don't like the name Phonebusters. I should tell you who came up with this: Sergeant Barry Elliott of the OPP, who has taken the lead against fraud against seniors in this country through telemarketing. It's his initiative. I'm very proud to support this initiative. The OPP, along with Sergeant Elliott, have taken a lead across the country to try to do something about seniors fraud in telemarketing. About 60% of the time seniors are targeted by these groups. But I must tell you that over the last year or so, because of Phonebusters, because of this great initiative, we've reduced the telemarketing fraud in this province by over 40%.

It can't stop here. We've had discussions with my colleagues across this country, with other provinces, who are interested in our initiative. We are assisting them and we are also going forward with talks with some of the states in the United States.

1450

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): My question is to the Minister of Health. A few days ago, Thunder Bay residents packed a town hall meeting that was called to discuss mental health services. They came to express their concerns and they came to make sure that those with mental illness don't get shoved on to a back burner when your restructuring commission finishes issuing its orders to close our psychiatric hospitals. People remember the last time a Conservative government shut down psychiatric beds. That was in 1973, and 25 years later, we still have psychiatric patients on the streets of our community

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I have a petition addressed to the Legislature regarding the privatization of health care.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we are concerned about the quality of health care in Ontario;

"Whereas we do not believe health care should be for sale;

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is taking steps to allow profit-driven companies to provide health care services in Ontario;

"Whereas we won't stand for profits over people;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Do not privatize our health care services."

I concur and I will affix my signature to it.

ABORTION

Mr Bob Wood (London South): I have a petition signed by 175 people.

"Whereas the Ontario health system is overburdened and unnecessary spending must be cut;

"Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury or illness and abortions are not therapeutic procedures; and

"Whereas the vast majority of abortions are done for reasons of convenience or finance; and

"Whereas the province has exclusive authority to determine what services will be insured; and

"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require funding for elective procedures; and

"Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is in fact hazardous to women's health; and

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded over 45,000 abortions in 1993 at an estimated cost of \$25 million;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cease from providing any taxpayers' dollars for the performance of abortions."

HOSPITAL RESTRICTURING

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):

This petition and similar petitions have some 70,000 names on them. It is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it deals with:

"Save the Hotel Dieu Hospital in Kingston, Ontario.

"The Health Services Restructuring Commission is recommending to the Ministry of Health that the Hotel Dieu Hospital be closed and that the Sisters of the Religious Hospitalers of St Joseph cease to govern and manage their hospital. If the ministry acts upon this recommendation, access to high-quality health care will be seriously undermined in Kingston and region.

I proudly sign my name to this petition as well. will not be closed.

It therefore recommends that users of the Hotel Dieu Hospital are asked to help them in the response to the commission by signing this petition so that the hospital

closed."

"Those who must use public transportation to get to outpatient clinics will be seriously affected. The taxpayers should not have to shoulder any extra burden in paying for the new outpatient facility when the Hotel Dieu site can accommodate the needs of the people of Kingston. The downtown businesses will suffer greatly should the site be

for which the sisters are recognized across Canada.

"The HSRC recommendations, which call for the dismissal of the sisters from their role in the governance and management of outpatient health care at the Hotel Dieu Hospital, are not in the best interests of the patients and families in this city and region. The people of Kingston deserve to have access to the kind of quality health care for which the sisters are recognized across Canada.

"The sisters are recognized for their leadership in the health care community. They have developed the plan for and operated an efficient outpatient teaching hospital and have provided the high quality of patient care for 153 years. Their distinct values and philosophy, coupled with the sisters' tradition of compassionate care, must not disappear.

"Whereas competent health care workers and students in various health care disciplines in Ontario have been denied training, employment, continued employment and advancement in their intended fields and suffered other forms of unjust discrimination because of the dictates of their consciences; and

"Whereas the health care workers experiencing such unjust discrimination have at present no practical and accessible legal means to protect themselves;

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary

to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination.” It is signed by a great number of my constituents and was taken up by the Christian Reformed Church.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas proper mental health care is essential to all Ontarians; and

“Whereas mental health care is severely underfunded in northwestern Ontario; and

“Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has called for the closure of the Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital with no replacement services in its place; and

“Whereas appropriate community mental health treatment is so lacking in northwestern Ontario that those who need treatment, support and rehabilitation are incarcerated in district jails; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Health has not delivered on its commitment to set up the Northwestern Ontario Mental Health Agency over one year after it promised to do so;

and

“Whereas there is a dramatic shortage of psychiatrists in northwestern Ontario, to the point where the doctors are severely overworked; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Health promised a 12-bed adolescent treatment centre and has failed to deliver on that promise;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to commit those funds necessary to provide full and proper mental health care to those in need in northwestern Ontario and call on the Minister of Health to cancel the closure of the Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital.”

ABORTION

1500

I'm pleased to sign that petition.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): I am presenting on behalf of my colleague the member for Carleton and on behalf of my constituent Deborah LaRocchia from St John the Apostle Church, and collected from St John the Evangelist and St Hyacinthe, a petition which reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario health system is overburdened and unnecessary spending must be cut; and

“Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury or illness and abortions are not therapeutic procedures; and

“Whereas the vast majority of abortions are done for reasons of convenience or finance; and

“Whereas the province has exclusive authority to determine what services will be insured; and

“Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require funding for elective procedures; and

“Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is in fact hazardous to women's health; and

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr David Tjilson (Dufferin-Peel): I have a petition from over a thousand students from the grade 5-6 classes in Dufferin county where the teacher is Linda Lockyer.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas old growth and wetlands ecosystems are necessary to maintain biodiversity in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas all industrial activity should be permanently excluded from these areas by law; and

“Whereas our government has a responsibility to protect these ecosystems for us and for future generations, “We, the undersigned students of Dufferin county, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario under the Lands for Life planning process to protect at least 30% to 35% of publicly owned lands and waters as provincial parks, conservation reserves, roadless wilderness or remote tourism areas.”

I have signed this petition.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas nurses in Ontario often experience coercion to participate in practices which directly contravene their deeply held ethical standards; and

“Whereas pharmacists in Ontario are often pressured to dispense or sell chemicals or devices contrary to their moral or religious beliefs; and

“Whereas public health workers in Ontario are expected to assist in providing controversial services and

«À l'attention de l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

«Attendu que des infirmières et infirmiers de l'Ontario éprouvent souvent de la contrainte de participer à des actes qui vont directement à l'encontre de leurs normes éthiques qui font partie de leurs convictions profondes ;

«Attendu que des pharmaciens et pharmaciennes de l'Ontario éprouvent souvent de la contrainte à préparer ou à vendre des produits chimiques ou des dispositifs con-

«Attendu qu'il est demandé à des travailleurs et travailleuses de la santé publique de l'Ontario qu'ils fournissent des services controversés et fassent de la promotion de documentation contre leur conscience ;

«Attendu que les travailleurs et travailleuses des soins de santé qui font l'objet de ces distinctions injustes ne disposent à l'heure actuelle d'aucun moyen pratique ou légal de se protéger ;

«Nous, les soussignés, insistons vivement auprès du parlement de l'Ontario afin qu'il édicte une loi qui reconnaisse explicitement la liberté de conscience des travailleurs et travailleuses des soins de santé et élimine la censure représentée par une distinction injuste contre les travailleurs et travailleuses des soins de santé en raison de leur refus de participer à des matières ou à des actes contraires à leur conscience et établissent des pénalités pour ce genre de contrainte et distinction injustes.»

J'y ajoute ma signature.

PORT DOVER HARBOUR MUSEUM

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I have an additional 500

signatures on a petition entitled "Open the Museum," Tilsonburg, Port Dover and many other communities.

"Whereas the Port Dover Harbour Museum addition was built with taxpayers' dollars in 1992 but has never opened to the public; and

"Whereas jobs in tourism, fishing and the marine industry are key to our area economy and way of life; and

"Whereas lawsuits, regulations and red tape have kept the museum closed; and

"Whereas all four levels of government and their attendant bureaucracies have proven incapable of opening the museum;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cut through the red tape and open the new addition to the Port Dover Harbour Museum."

I agree with this petition and hereby affix my signature to it.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Frank Michash (Kenora): I have a petition to the

Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ministry of Transportation is intent on reducing northern winter road maintenance services; and

"Whereas such downgrading places the lives of northern residents at undue and unnecessary risk;

promoting controversial materials against their con-

"There are three other "whereases," and then, "We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North): I'm presenting a petition from a number of seniors in Minister Clement's riding, Brampton South, similar to the last one regarding nurses, pharmacists, public health workers, physicians and other health care workers who experience discrimination:

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

To that I do affix my signature.

Mr Frank Michash (Kenora): I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Conservative government through the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario hereby stop child care cutbacks as funding cutbacks will affect the availability of professionally run child care programs, resource centres and services for children with special needs."

I've added my name to that petition as well.

PROTECTION FOR

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

PROTECTION POUR TRAVAILLEURS

DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington): I have a petition which I'm presenting on behalf of the member for Waterloo North who, as Minister of Health, is, as you know, unable to present petitions in this House. It urges the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination.

It's signed by a number of constituents in the Kitchener-Waterloo area.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell): I'ai ici une pétition signée par plusieurs citoyens et citoyennes de la région de Plantagenet et de Hawkesbury.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to disallow these reductions in service and to guarantee that winter roads across northern regions of the province receive the necessary maintenance to ensure the safe passage of drivers."

I have attached my name to that petition as well.

GAS WELLS

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I have received yet another 500 petitions from farmers opposed to registration of private gas wells.

"Whereas new regulations require the registration and licensing of all gas wells by June 27, 1998;

"Whereas most private gas wells in Ontario have been abandoned or are of marginal economic value;

"Whereas the plugging of private gas wells to industry standards is expensive and not necessarily justified environmentally; and

"Whereas in recent years there has been little communication, understanding and trust between the Ministry of Natural Resources petroleum division and area farmers, land owners and gas well drillers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to exempt existing private-use gas wells from requirements under the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act and concentrate resources on detecting, preventing and rectifying any environmental risk or impact of these existing or new gas wells."

I sign this petition.

1510

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Isabel Bassett (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 36, An Act to amend the Election Act and Election Finances Act, and to make related amendments to other statutes, when Bill 36 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment; and at such time, the bill shall be ordered for third reading; immediately be called and two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill;

That, at the end of that time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment;

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceeding on the bill, the division bells shall be limited to five minutes; and

Mr Bill Grimmer (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): I am pleased to speak to the motion today. In beginning the debate on the need for time allocation on Bill 36, I would like to start with the memo sent by the Commission on Election Finances and received by the government House leader on January 26, 1998. In this memo, the Commission on Election Finances makes it very clear that they want this legislation to move ahead quickly. I'll quote from the memo:

"The existing Election Finances Act has not been updated since 1986. The commission has prepared a comprehensive package of amendments. The proposed amendments are intended to address problems that have arisen, bring dollar values in line with current conditions, streamline administration and clarify the language."

"A meeting was held with representatives of the House leaders on March 27, 1997. At the meeting, some of the more important amendments were reviewed and questions answered. A copy of the briefing notes is attached. The commission offered to clarify the rationale for any of its proposals and to be available to meet with individuals or groups studying or drafting proposed amendments."

And here I think is the crucial issue:

"The issue of timing was emphasized. The commission, parties, constituency associations, volunteers and chartered accountants must have sufficient time to become familiar with changes in the legislation before the next election. I am seeking a meeting with each of the House leaders to restate the need for amendments to the act. Early passage of amendments would permit the necessary work to be done to implement the updated legislation prior to the next general election."

That memo was signed by Jack Murray, who is the chair of the Commission on Election Finances. I think it's been well documented in the debate on second reading of Bill 36 that Jack Murray is a past president of the New Democratic Party and that the Commission on Election Finances is one that has a balance of members from each of the three parties in Ontario, so you see that there is a consensus that emerged on the commission, ever since 1994, on the need for changes in the election rules.

During the debate we've heard a number of arguments from the opposition against the proposed legislation. I don't know the number of hours we've spent on debate so far, but the arguments have emerged and get very cyclical, very repetitive. For example, from the Liberal Party there's been a concern about the spending limits, despite the fact that the spending limits recommended in the legislation are exactly what was requested by the member for Windsor-Walkerville in his letter of March 17, 1998. On St Patrick's Day of this year he wrote to our government House leader and said:

"Dear Minister:

"I'm writing in regard to the changes to the Election Finances Act proposed by the Commission on Election Finances. Dalton McGuinty has asked me to take the lead for the Liberal caucus on this issue.

"While I believe that a review of the act is timely, given the government's elimination of 27 ridings, I'm extremely concerned with some of the changes proposed by the commission.

"I'm particularly concerned with the massive increase in the per riding election expense limits and the elimination of the campaign blackout period for election advertising. I was very disturbed to read in the Toronto Star on February 21, 1998, that Norm Sterling believed that the commission's proposed 80% increase in per riding expense limits to an average limit of \$98,000 per riding was reasonable.

"The government argued quite strongly during the debate on Bill 81, the bill that eliminated 27 ridings, that if the federal ridings were good enough for the federal government, then they were good enough for the provincial government." Here is the crucial sentence: "Liberals ask, if the federal expense limits were high enough for the recent federal election campaign, why are they not high enough for Mike Harris?"

"They are, and we've adopted those federal government limits right in our legislation. There has been some suggestion that the federal government limits are not what is in this legislation; in fact they're a little bit higher at the federal level than what we've suggested.

"This information is confirmed in a statement that came from Elections Canada very recently, 'Actual Election Expense Limits for Registered Political Parties in the 1997 Federal Election.' These are the limits that were put out by Elections Canada and each party was subject to them. Parties that had representation in 301 electoral districts in Canada averaged 60,57 cents per voter. As has been acknowledged in this debate, Bill 36 proposes that only 60 cents per voter be allowed in Ontario, so we are actually under the federal limits as is confirmed by this Elections Canada memo.

"There has been some discussion in the debate, and it has got quite repetitive, that the suggested minimum of 28 days is not enough time to wage an election in Ontario. I think I can say with some certainty that a vast majority of the people in my riding would not be at all concerned about an election campaign being reduced from 42 or 37 days, as has been the case in the past — I believe the 1995 election was 42 days — down to 28 days, because it seems to me that most people I spoke to during the 1995 campaign had little or no interest in the campaign until the last 10 or 15 days.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): Why don't we go with a 10-day campaign?

Mr Grinnett: There's been a suggestion that maybe we should go to a 10-day campaign. That's unrealistic, because I think 28 days is the number that's used in several jurisdictions in Canada now. The chief election officer of Ontario recommended the 28 days. We could save

nine days in the election campaign by having a permanent voters' list. There wouldn't be the need during that first nine days for everybody to wait for the election list and for the enumeration to be done.

If you look at the number of days in the elections across Canada, the minimum is 21 in Newfoundland, and I think we're agreed in this House that probably is not a long enough time in some of the ridings of Ontario. The member for Renfrew North indicated that in his riding 28 days wouldn't be enough to get around. I commented already once and I'll comment again that in some of the larger ridings of Ontario — and my riding is not the largest, but it is probably in the largest 15 or 20 ridings — 28 days wouldn't be enough to get around and have a real, meaningful conversation with every constituent. I'll grant the member for Renfrew North that. But realistically, an election campaign of 28 days — and that's if the minimum were chosen — is enough time for members to get the necessary information out to their constituents on what their position is, what position they take on the major issues, and that's presumably what the elections will be waged on and decided on.

1520

There has been a lot of interest and discussion as well about contribution limits, and it bears repeating that at the federal level in Canada — I think this would be some surprise to people watching — there is no limit to the amount of money that people can contribute to their riding association or to the central party. We in Ontario have a history of imposing these limits, and what we're proposing in Bill 36 has been recommended by other non-political parties. When you look at the spending and contribution limits in other jurisdictions, it seems very reasonable.

It has been mentioned by the member for Niagara South that Ontario's contribution and spending limits look quite modest when you compare them with other jurisdictions such as Manitoba or Newfoundland. He has said in just that the last thing we need in Ontario is Manitoba- or Newfoundland-style politics. I think he was making that point because to some extent the concern raised by the opposition that we're moving towards an American-style election process in Canada is rather silly, especially when you look at the comparison of what we're recommending in Bill 36 with what exists already in other Canadian jurisdictions, not only at the federal level but also in other provinces.

It's important to remember that this legislation is actually the result of a long series of discussions that have gone on in Ontario about electoral reform, and that discussion most recently, since the 1986 legislation was put out — the discussion about the need for reform in the electoral process began as early as 1991. At that time there was a three-person ad hoc committee, one member from each party, put together. They managed to reach consensus and they proposed some changes. Then there were the recommendations of the chief election officer, and his most recent report came out quite recently.

Most fundamentally, most of the changes that are contained in Bill 36 are similar to changes that were recom-

donations. I'd just like to read the first couple of sentences in that particular article:

"A Progressive Conservative government would amend the election spending law to guard against another Queen's Park fund-raising scandal," leader Mike Harris says. "We're going to have to be far more open and have tougher and stricter guidelines," Harris told reporters after addressing about 60 supporters here yesterday. Harris said he wants to close up any and all loopholes that are there. He would not allow corporations to make a donation over the allowable limit and then split it into smaller amounts in different individuals' names to get around the law, he said.

"Harris cited a recently published newspaper account that said a top Ontario Liberal Party official told former Liberal fund-raiser Patricia Starr how to make an illegal donation legal by splitting receipts. That is exactly the type of impropriety that he wants to end, Harris said. Starr was at the centre of the scandal which rocked Premier David Peterson's government and has continued to dog him since he called an election last week for September 6," and the article goes on.

I just read that into the record to bring to the attention of the House the consistency of this government, the consistency of our leader. The all-party commission reviewed the Election Finances Act and supported changes to rules regarding increased spending and contribution limits. In fact, as mentioned just a few minutes ago, the former NDP party president Jack Murray chaired the commission and recommended that the spending limit be increased to \$1,400 per person rather than the 96 cents that's in the legislation. It is my understanding that that was unanimously supported by all members of that committee. The Liberals have more recently requested publicly that Ontario's spending limits be brought in line with the federal elections of 96 cents, and that is indeed exactly what we're doing with this particular bill.

1530

We've heard from both the opposition parties on several occasions about all-party consent. It has always been all-party consent. That was true, as I understand, in 1986, when there was an election reform process. That's when the Tories were in opposition, and yes, there was all-party consent at that time. But there certainly wasn't in 1996, with the Fewer Politicians Act. As we look across Canada historically, the changes that have occurred in the nine provinces, the most recent changes in each province, at least four of the provinces used majority rule.

There's no question that negotiations went on in good faith. You first get full agreement and then later on you have to have them at the table. Unfortunately, it did not work out that way.

There have been many parts in this bill, and many concerns have been expressed — things like signoff by the party leader. The opposition has thrown it back at us, "Oh, this is another Harris kind of activity," when in fact that was the recommendation of the chief election officer. You may note that it's not in the final legislation.

They think is a good idea as well.

That is one of the reasons why we need time allocation in this legislation. We need to move ahead with the permanent voters' list. Not only does it allow us to shorten the length of the election campaign and eliminate that nine-day period at the beginning of the election campaign when everyone's waiting around for the voters' list and for the enumeration process to be completed, but it also gives Ontario a chance to save its taxpayers \$10 million every election.

This is something that is long overdue. It's a logical follow-up to the Fewer Politicians Act, which we passed in this Legislature in the last session and which has led to larger ridings, ridings which have a larger number of registered voters and a larger population in each riding. Given that we now have larger ridings, it's logical that we should move ahead with this legislation to change the electoral law and we should move ahead on a timely basis. That has been underlined in the memo from the Commission on Election Finances.

I think it's also pretty obvious that you have to allow each of the parties to get their information together for the next election. That's the reason, I think, why the election commission has sent the House leaders at least two memos. They've been in contact with the House leaders on at least two occasions to say, "Please, let's move ahead with this legislation." As Mr Murray said in his memo: "Enough time must be provided for the commission, riding associations, accountants and the parties to familiarize themselves with the changes."

The opposition has said they want to delay this process. They want to get all-party agreement. All-party agreement has already occurred on at least two occasions: in 1991, when the ad hoc committee of three members of the Legislature was able to agree on certain changes that were required and, most significantly, in the recommendations from the Ontario Commission on Election Finances. Those recommendations that were made in 1994 really form the bulk of the changes that are suggested in Bill 36. When you carefully examine those changes — again, the recommendation on spending 96 cents per voter brings us in line with federal spending, and in fact it's less than in most other jurisdictions in Canada and in other provinces.

I think, on this motion, those are the comments I wish to make and I'll pass it on to my colleague now.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): It's certainly a pleasure to be able to speak on the time allocation motion as it relates to Bill 36, the elections act. This government has been very consistent with the position that we've taken over time, over the various campaigns. I'm looking back to an article that was written in the Toronto Star on August 9, 1990, that indicates the desire of the leader of this party to overcome scandal, to put some control on

We've talked a lot about the minimum length of these election campaigns, how long from the call until the actual voting day. In this particular piece of legislation, 28 days would be the minimum. I can assure you that the public is indeed very tired of long campaigns. I've heard this repeatedly from many people in my riding. In 28 days, four weeks, with improved methods of communication, we can get our message out. Anyone can get their message out in a 28-day period. We also have a permanent voters' list. With that permanent voters' list there will be no need for the enumeration to be carried out, and therefore there will be a saving of some nine days. That all fits in moving down to a 28-day or four-week period.

Also, there is consistency here as we move along, recognizing the previous bill, the Fewer Politicians Act. As we move to a riding that's the same size and same shape as a federal riding, where boundaries are continuous, it's far easier for the general public to understand federal and provincial politics when there is some consistency there. I'm certainly very proud of the fact that as a party we have had the intestinal fortitude to put forth a bill that reduces the total number of politicians in Ontario from 130 down to 103, a reduction of some 27 MPs come the next election.

We've heard a fair amount from the opposition about how this kind of bill is providing all kinds of political opportunism. I would suggest that what happened in 1990, when the government of the day was only three years into their mandate and called an election basically to consolidate their position, was totally unnecessary, as they found out from the public. In 1995 we had another situation, where we went almost five years without an election. The normal expected mandate is around four years, and when you start going into almost that fifth year it's a sign the government is in trouble. It was obvious to most people that the only reason they went the extra year and sat for only 29 days was simply to collect the paycheques during that extra year.

It's interesting that this all-party commission has come out with a recommendation that the Commission on Election Finances and the office of the chief election officer should be joined. This would be a saving of \$1 million per year, just simply through the reduction in the number of bureaucrats in those two organizations. There's nothing wrong with bureaucrats; it's just that if we bring them together we can operate for far less.

We now have a permanent voters' list. Elections Canada has developed a permanent voters' list. They're prepared to share it with the province of Ontario, and by working with that there is going to be a saving of some \$10 million per election. And \$10 million is not exactly chicken feed; that's an important saving.

As you look at these recommendations in the bill, the total savings to the taxpayers of Ontario will be some \$15 million per election, and also, in addition to that, \$1 million per year if that merger occurs. This election process will be transparent and it will be modernized. The next election won't be won in the last few weeks. The public is paying an awful lot more attention to what

governments do and what opposition parties are saying. They have watched a government that has been doing from the campaign, the Common Sense Revolution that we put forward over four years ago, used it for a full year, and then were elected on that. We've implemented literally every last point that's in that platform.

The public of Ontario know that the next platform we roll out will mean business, that we will follow through on the future commitments we make — a very different kind of politics to what the public have experienced in the past. We know you can't win by handouts just before an election, as has been attempted by other parties that were in government quite recently, particularly the NDP, using the spring to go around Ontario making promises as to what they would do after the next election.

Our changes to the Election Finances Act are free and democratic. They are open to everyone. Unlike our friends in opposition, we have not tried to use public funds to win elections. Our reforms will improve the system and increase its transparency by creating a permanent voters' list, by requiring that political advertisers show who the sponsor is and by making bribery an offence under the Election Act. These are just a few examples.

Making election campaigns shorter is also a key reform. The opposition says it gives them less time to get their message out. It just shows that they don't understand the basic principles of good communications. Good communications should be an ongoing process. The Liberals and NDP could borrow a page from the Conservative campaign manual: Be up front with the public. Communicate well in advance of an election call. Then you won't have to worry how long the election campaign has to be.

The NDP realized too late the need for regular communications, tried to communicate with a glossy brochure on photo health cards distributed to every home in the province just prior to the election call — a hamstrung handling of mass public relations. The public won't buy you a fire hose if you wait until the house is on fire before you request it. Honest communication is indeed a two-way street and it must be a regular occurrence.

Our government has communicated change and we have regularly communicated that change to the public. We have explained our reforms, as any good corporate citizen would. Our communications have been credible because they are regular, consistent and based on fact — far from being propaganda, as the opposition suggests. We are indeed committed to providing the public with accurate information on which to base their decisions. It costs money but is essential in times of fundamental change.

There are many things in Bill 36 that are indeed very important. Bill 36 is a long-overdue reform to our two election acts, made necessary by changes introduced under the Fewer Politicians Act. It reduces the bureaucracy and cost of elections to the public. The opposition is crying wolf to the public, but the public really doesn't care and doesn't believe them when they're calling wolf.

The Liberals and the NDP are going to have to accept that politics is changing in Ontario and across Canada.

They're very, very supportive, especially of the 28-day minimum length of an election.

From the North Bay Nugget, June 11:

"The most welcome change is a reduction in the campaign to 28 days from 37 days. That's plenty of time in today's world for parties and politicians to make their points. Most campaigns consist of repetitious speeches and promises given by different people in different parts of the province. Local issues do not carry much weight outside the boundaries of a riding. Sometimes issues arise during a campaign, but often they're manufactured by political spin doctors."

It goes on to say near the end of the article, "Opposition parties don't like any of the changes." Well, that's part of the British system. Whatever the government brings in, of course the opposition and the third party are going to be opposed to it. That's tradition. But when something good comes along such as a bill like this, there's absolutely no reason why they should vehemently oppose it and actually get kicked out of the Legislature. I would be very embarrassed if I was caught in that position.

It goes on, "...arguing they need more time in a campaign to get noticed and don't have access to the same funds as a governing party does." In the last election the NDP was the governing party and they had all kinds of opportunity there. In the previous one the Liberals were the governing party and they had all kinds of opportunity. Prior to that, I guess it was a combination, NDP-Liberal, and we couldn't tell which was which; and prior to that, it was the Conservatives. Really you can see that there's no gain from being the party in government going into an election. "These objections diminish, of course, should an opposition party get into power."

It's interesting, some of these spending limits. They're all over and we are really looking at one of the lower ones when we go across Canada. We're consistent with the federal government, but certainly it's much lower than some of the other provinces. Take, for example, Newfoundland. It's at some \$3 per elector, and we're talking 96 cents. Look at New Brunswick, it's \$1.75 per elector, and up to \$2 in the case of a by-election. In Manitoba, it's \$1.25 per elector. On it goes. In Nova Scotia it's \$1 per elector, and in PEI it's \$1.75.

I think that as we look at particularly the really big issue that came out from the opposition on this — spending — they were really concerned about the \$1.40, which they agreed to. We have now agreed with them that maybe that's more than is really necessary and came in at 96 cents, which they asked for, and lo and behold, they still don't really agree with that.

This is a time allocation motion to get on with Bill 36, a very important bill in the history of this province. It's been 12 years since we really had an upgrade or a change in the elections reform act here in the province of Ontario. This one is going to clarify it, make it more understandable for the public. It'll match with our Fewer Politicians Act that we brought in back in 1996.

and must get with the changes or be left in the dust. People are not interested in vote-buying; they want real programs, well explained to them.

The Liberals and the NDP are in the same position we faced in 1995. The party that was in debt needed to get our message out at the same time, but we didn't try to buy the election then and we have no need to try and buy the election today. The public knows what we stand for. That's the challenge to the Liberals and for the NDP: to be clear about issues. Recognize that this is almost impossible for either party, because they are so busy being against everything, nobody really knows what they indeed stand for.

1540

As we look at some of the things that have come out in the press, election changes are not sinister. This is an excellent article written in the Chatham Daily News back on June 13, 1998. Some of the highlights in that particular article:

"The legislation in question cuts the length of the campaign from 37 to 28 days, standardizes the amount candidates can spend per voter at 96 cents, excludes research polling and travel costs from the spending limits, slightly increases the tax credits for political contributions and introduces a new enumeration system and permanent voters' list."

I'll just continue with this, which is particularly interesting: "Opposition members pounded their desks and made such a flap over the changes, eight of them were ordered out of the Legislature." That is the kind of public display that was put on on that occasion. "Although the recommendations came from an all-party committee, the government did introduce the changes without all-party consent, which rankled opposition members."

With just a little talking and a little more working-together and working with the members who were on that election commission, we could have had all-party agreement, but they did not communicate, I gather, with the caucus, so there was not this understanding of what they were voting for, because on two occasions there was unanimous consent by all seven of the members who sat on that commission.

"For our money, a shorter election means less rhetoric and standardized spending, and a revamped enumeration system makes, dare we say, common sense.

"Hardly the stuff of dastardly plots.

"If Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty (who called the changes 'an underhanded attempt to turn the next election into the largest seat sale in Canada's history') is serious about replacing Mike Harris, we urge him to save the rhetoric for truly meaningful issues of which there are plenty."

Interjection: What paper was that?

Mr Galt: That came from the Chatham Daily News.

Another very interesting one was from the North Bay Nugget. They're talking about, "Election changes are for the better." There's no question about that. The public are thrilled with the kind of changes that we're bringing in.

I certainly look forward to this next election, probably more or less a year down the road. I think the public will appreciate what has been put in place for them with this particular bill, Bill 36, as we move along. So I can very enthusiastically support the time allocation motion and also Bill 36 when it comes and I look forward to the vote on this bill in the near future.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): Let me first of all say that I'll be sharing my time with the member for St Catharines and the member for Windsor-Walkerville.

I was struck by one of the last comments that the member for Northumberland made when he said this is a very important bill in the history of this province. I would suggest to him that if this is a very important bill in the history of this province, as he has indicated, then why is it being time-allocated? Why is there not any opportunity given at all for the people of Ontario to make representations on the bill? Why do we take this position that the government knows best and everybody else just has to take it?

We know from the history of this government that whenever they time-allocate something, particularly when they time-allocate something in which they don't allow for any committee time whatsoever, there's usually something wrong with the bill, and after it becomes law, it becomes necessary to bring in another bill. We saw that with the property tax bill, which had to be here four times. On four different occasions, the government got it wrong. It's still not right, according to the clerks and treasurers in this province.

The point is that if it is an important bill — and it is an important bill in the sense that we do not want to have an Americanized system in the province of Ontario. We do not want to run elections on the basis on which they do in so many American jurisdictions, where congressmen and state legislators have to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to run for election every two or three years. We decided in Ontario many years ago that we do not want to in effect have elections bought by different people in this province.

So I would suggest to him, if this is such an important bill, then why don't we take some time and get it right? We've already heard there's not going to be an election this fall. Mike Harris has said so on a number of occasions. Why not put the bill out for some public discussions this coming summer, have some hearings on it, get some input from the general public out there and then deal with it in the fall? That's the first point.

The second point is that here we are again, on an important piece of legislation, using time allocation in order to invoke closure. I believe this is the 25th time this has happened since this government took over.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algonia-Manitoulin): Incredible. 1550

Mr Gerretsen: It's incredible because when you think about 20 years ago, it was almost unheard of to have a

time allocation motion or to have closure in debate on any particular matter here. It has almost become standard practice that there's time allocation, there's closure on just about every piece of legislation this government brings forward.

I think the people of Ontario and the parliamentary system lose something as a result thereof. We've gone through it many times before, how the rule changes allow these kinds of things to happen now much more frequently than was certainly the case in the past. I won't dwell on that, because I think there are some very important principles we should talk about that are contained in this bill, but I would just suggest to him that if a bill is of that importance, and he himself has admitted that it is a very important piece of legislation, we shouldn't be acting hastily. We should be taking our time, we should be getting views from the general public, and then we should deal with it after we've heard from the general public.

The other thing I was very much struck by was that he said he wants to run elections from a fairness concept, that people have the right to know what the policy positions of the various parties are. If he wants to be fair about it, then why is he not saying anything to his own government about the kind of material that has been sent out by this government on three occasions within the last couple of months? The last two, of course, were this piece that is called *Are We on the Right Track?* I'm sure that everybody in Ontario who received this probably thought this was a piece of Conservative Party propaganda. They've got every right to do it. Any party has a right to find out how the people feel about it. However, they don't have the right to use taxpayers' money to find out the opinions of people in Ontario. This was paid for by taxpayers' money. Almost \$1 million was spent to get this little piece of propaganda out.

How about the latest one, which came out last Thursday or Friday, which is the health Report to Taxpayers? It's referred to as volume 1, number 1. In other words, I guess they plan to do this on an ongoing basis from here on in. This is a pure piece of political propaganda in which the ruling party of this province, the Reform-Tory party, wants to let the people know how they feel they are doing with health care and some of the changes that are being made.

Of course, one of the main reasons they're doing this is because they've been receiving an awful lot of flak on this score. We all know that. We all know that the people of Ontario are very much concerned about their health care. It is the number one issue. People want to know that if and when they or their loved ones require the necessary health care, whether it's in hospital or from doctors, it's available for them and that they're not subject to a six-month or a one-year waiting list. That's what the people are concerned about. I think people, generally speaking, feel that the quality of health care out there is not of the same standard it was three or four years ago. The government is trying to counter this by saying what wonderful things they have done.

Again, as was pointed out here today, this piece of propaganda cost the taxpayers of Ontario \$1.27 million, to get this piece of propaganda out to every household in Ontario. With all the cuts there have been to health care this year, I'm sure average Ontarians are asking themselves, "Wouldn't that money be better spent on good-quality health care?" Wouldn't that money have gone a long way, for example, in dealing with the user fees that senior citizens have to pay right now with respect to their drugs?

If you want to talk about fair, let's be fair about it. Take this \$1.27 million. You've got a right to communicate to the public your party's position on various aspects that come before this House, but use your own party resources to do that and don't use money that has been set aside for government purposes.

The other thing I found very interesting — and I've heard it in this House twice now. Twice I've heard a cabinet minister say, "Well, it's a householder." Today I believe it was referred to by the Minister of Health, in answer to a question, as a householder. I always understood a householder to be an information piece that is put out by a member of provincial Parliament to his or her constituents in his or her riding. That's what a householder is. It is charged against the global budgets we have to run our offices, both here and in our constituency.

There's no such thing as a government householder. The government doesn't have money that can be used for partisan purposes to let the people of Ontario know how they feel they are doing in particular aspects of public policy. A householder is an individual piece that an individual member of this Legislature can send out, totally within the rules, to his or her own constituents. To have this referred to as a government householder — I believe the Minister of Community and Social Services made the same comment a couple of weeks ago — is really extraordinary. I don't think they know what a householder is. I don't know, I think that if this kind of blatant propaganda campaign keeps going, then perhaps it's time that we ask the question of higher authority, to see if this really is within the limits of the kind of money government can spend its money on.

The other thing is that there has been much debate in this House about permanent voters' lists and the fact that the campaign is going from 37 to 28 days. They're all very important issues. But the most important issue is the amount of money that can be raised by a party, or that can be raised within a local riding, that can be spent within a local riding by a candidate for a party. For the government to suggest that the federal rules have simply been applied is simply not correct. I can give you three or four ridings, that were not selectively picked, and in each and every riding the federal limit is below the proposed limit as set out in this act. In Windsor-St. Clair for example, the federal limit is \$64,000; under the new proposed limits as set out in this act, it would be \$70,000. Algoma-Manitoulin goes from \$61,000, which is the federal limit right now, to \$70,500. In Victoria-Haliburton the federal limit is \$67,000; the proposed limit in this legislation is \$75,800.

In a lot of these cases, the amount of money that can be spent within the ridings during election campaigns has gone up quite dramatically from the current provincial limits. They average anywhere from about \$20,000 to \$30,000 to \$40,000 per riding. I guess what it really boils down to is whether we want to run the kind of elections that are so common in the States, where money talks. I suppose if you had a perfect system, you wouldn't have to rely on donations at all. Perhaps the amount of money parties should be able to collect should be totally government regulated. I've often thought about that because I think that once you start mixing money and politics, and I suppose it has traditionally been done that way, you always run the risk of being accused or giving the perception that you are somehow doing things, particularly if you're in government, for your political friends. I think the further we can stay away from that, the better the system will be in the long run.

The other major change is the amount that can be collected within a riding from potential donors. That goes up from \$750 to \$1,000. It's interesting that the limit to parties goes up from \$4,000 to \$7,500. That is a huge increase. That is almost double the amount of money. That means a very few people in some ridings, by giving the maximum amount they're entitled to, can almost control that particular candidate. I think the further we stay away from that kind of politics, the better it is.

1600

On the overall limit that can be spent by the parties provincially, again the members on the government side would like you to believe that all they've adopted are the federal limits. Well, let's take a look. The party expenditure limit right now under the existing act, the amount of money that a party can spend during an election, is \$2.6 million. That's what can be spent by the central party. To be correct, it's \$2,699 million, so let's call it \$2.7 million. Federally, within the province of Ontario, it's \$3.2 million. What is it in this new act? It's \$4 million. So to suggest that somehow we've adopted the federal limit is not correct. There is an additional \$800,000 that can be spent: \$4 million by the central party during an election campaign and a shorter election campaign of 28 days rather than the 37 days that we currently have.

I won't be saying much more about it and I will be turning it over to the member for St. Catharines in just a moment, but I think this is a very important issue for the people of Ontario, and it's twofold. The first issue is whether a government in effect can send out purely partisan propaganda at government expense. I think that issue is closely tied into it. How many more of these brochures are we going to receive before we have the election within the next year or so?

Mr. Gary J. Guzzo (Ottawa-Rideau): How many would you like?

Mr. Gerretsen: Yes, "How many would you like?" That's well said.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Who said that?

Mr Gerretsen: The former judge from Ottawa-Rideau said that.

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton): The public should know.

Mr Gerretsen: The public should know, and certainly you have the right to tell them what your positions are, but it's got to be done with your own party funds and not with government money. That's the essence of this.

The second point in dealing with the bill itself directly is that the nonsense about this being something that was agreed to by the election finances commission on a unanimous basis is simply not so. The limits that were set out within that report were quite a bit different from the limits that we're talking about in this bill. I think it should also be borne in mind that this is the first time in at least the last 25 years that this kind of bill does not have all-party support.

That is a tragedy, because I think if there is one thing that our electoral system, the manner in which we elect governments every four or five years, is done in a fair and open and straightforward manner. What's happening here is that the governing party that happens to be in power at any one time is going to have a distinct advantage above the normal advantages of incumbency. That simply isn't fair, and I hope the people of Ontario will speak out about this.

Mr Bradley: I am saddened by the fact that I once again have to speak on yet another motion which closes off debate in the Ontario Legislature. Unfortunately, and it is not good for democracy when this happens, this is becoming routine with the Mike Harris government. In this case they did not call the Legislature back into session until the very end of the month of April and then decided they would have the House sit into the evenings every night so they could do twice as many bills in one day. You did not hear me say twice as much work, but twice as many bills could be processed through the grinder each day.

We have, I think my friend from Kingston and The Islands said, the 25th time allocation motion. "Time allocation" is a nice way of saying "choking off debate," ending debate. Mike Harris and his government do not want to hear extensive debate on this kind of bill because they know the people of this province, if they were aware of the facts, and particularly those who are guardians of the democratic process, would be very concerned if they knew the provisions of this bill; how it will help to Americanize the system of elections in this province and how it will make money play a much more central role in election campaigns.

The fact that we are dealing with time allocation motions, time after time, even under the new rules which Mike Harris set up — I have to be careful in the terminology I use here. One of the people who likes to appeal to the Premier very much, and would see himself as up-

What is interesting to observe with this government is this assembly.

Even with these rules, which heavily favour the government, rules that would rig the Legislature in favour of whatever government is in power, in this case the Mike Harris government.

By the way, you should know that one of the provisions of Bill 26, now that I think back to it, was the establishment of the Health Services Restructuring Commission of Ontario, which I call the hospital destruction commission because it is a front out there for the government to have an excuse to close the doors of hospitals which people in our province have built up in their communities over the years and which have continued to provide excellent health care services to people in those communities.

That would be a way of Premier Mike Harris getting out of his promise. I guess the government felt, when he said to Robert Fisher during the leaders' debate in May 1995, "Certainly, Robert, I can guarantee you it is not my plan to close hospitals." Well, we've had 35 hospitals which have been terminated, which have been closed or forced to merge in this province. So there is a glaring promise that was made and never kept; in fact broken on 35 different occasions, and I'm sure more.

The point I am making is that we have seen a consistent pattern of this government trying to bulldoze things through this House, to avoid the kind of extensive debate which allows the public to become knowledgeable of the issues surrounding the legislation the government is bringing forward.

So they hid it. They brought it in one day as a surprise. They didn't tell the opposition about it; they didn't tell the news media. After they had made a major announcement about Hydro, because that was the major news story of the day — indeed there will be a debate in the House and some public hearings, and I always like to see public hearings, on the Hydro bill — the government slipped in its changes to the Election Finances Act, to the way in which elections are run in this province; the bill which stacks the deck in favour of the governing party or indeed of a party that is able to obtain millions of dollars of funds from the major powerful, rich interests in this province. It did it without any significant consultation. It cherry-picked from several reports that it had, but essentially this bill was written in the back rooms of the Conservative Party and the back rooms of the Premier.

saying, "Give me \$4 million and I can buy this election for the Conservative Party, because I can buy the right ads and so on." So it was discouraging to see the government bring this in, but not surprising.

"Then the government's bluff got called. We said: 'If these proposals are good proposals, of course you want to subject them to public hearings. We want to take them to Listowel, Ontario; we want to take them to Moncton, Ontario; we want to take them to Metropolitan Toronto; we want to take them to Ottawa; we want to take them to Wawa; if they are so well accepted, if you want to have input, we'll have public hearings.' The government would have none of that: 'We don't want the people to have anything to say about this bill. They don't need to know. We know best.' If Tom Long is satisfied, if Guy Giorno is satisfied, if the back-room boys are satisfied, then that's all it takes." So we didn't have that.

Then we said, "Maybe it's because the government wants to rush it through this session, because they're having some big fund-raisers and they want to be able to get this through this session." I don't agree there's a need for that hurry, but if that be the case, then we said: "Will you at least entertain amendments? You may accept them and you may not accept them. Will you at least have some committee time, and by the time allocation motion you could leave that committee time, to have amendments proposed and dealt with?"

"No, we'll have none of that. We want no amendments. We want no consultation. We want to ram this through. Nobody is paying attention." The advisers to the Premier say: "Don't worry, Mike. The news media won't play this up. They'll see it as an in-house, or as they say in the United States, an inside-Beltway issue, and they won't play it up. Look, we've even got some editorials in favour of what we want."

Somebody quoted the Chatham, North Bay and Peterborough newspapers. What do you expect now when Conrad Black owns most of the newspapers in this province, when he owns — how many is it now, Mr Ford, is it 60 newspapers now out of 104 newspapers? When he controls them and we all know his views, and those views are going to be reflected in editorials, I suppose we shouldn't be surprised to see some of the newspapers that used to stand up for democracy in this province now bowing down to the Mike Harris agenda. It's disconcerting, yes, but not surprising when you know that Conrad Black, who didn't like the newspapers that existed before, said they were full of soft left-wing propaganda or something. He said that. I guess I shouldn't be surprised. However, the news media do have a role to play. When you're discussing Bill 160, the education bill, I understand there are two sides of it. I happen to disagree vehemently with the government on Bill 160, but I can understand editorials on both sides of the issue. When you're dealing with the Hydro bill — should you privatize, should you partially privatize, should you keep it in the public domain? — I can understand editorials on either side of that issue, and on most of the issues that come before this

Tom Long would have had more to say about this bill than Charles Harnick, the Attorney General of the province. Leslie Noble would have had more to say about this bill than Tom Froese, the member for St Catharines-Brock. Guy Giorno would have certainly had more to say about this bill than Bill Grimmett, who was the first speaker on the government side. You will remember him. He was the federal Tory-Reform Party organizer during the last federal election campaign in his area, now the Conservative member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay. He likes that. He does not mind my saying this at all. I wouldn't do it if he were offended by it, but he doesn't mind my saying this in the House. After all, that's his view. I think it's just worthy of comment and it does reveal a lot.

1610

My friends Tom Froese and Frank Sheehan had the Tory-Reform candidates in the last federal election in the gallery with them. I won't tell that to Ken Atkinson, the former Conservative federal member for St Catharines, who had to fight tooth and nail against Reform Party election. I won't tell him, unless he's watching from his law firm this afternoon or is staying up late tonight and has nothing else to watch, that Rob Hesp, the Reform Party candidate in the last federal election, was sitting huddled — I'll say huddled — with my friends Tom Froese and Frank Sheehan in the gallery. And there were others bowing and paying tribute at the same time in the gallery. Obviously the policies are somewhat the same. I won't tell Ken Atkinson, the federal Conservative member, about that because I think he might be a bit exercised by that.

Anyway, a sham of consultation took place. They gave it to the government deputy House leader and Chairman of Management Board, Mr Hodgson, to carry in the House. He was really just getting his orders from the back room on what would happen here. There was never any genuine effort to come to a consensus, because what the government wanted was essentially to stack the deck in favour of the Conservative Party. They knew they wouldn't be able to develop a consensus. Let me tell that there are a number of provisions in this bill which are non-contestable. If this bill contained changes such as the permanent voters' list and certain other administrative changes, this would have gone through in this House in 15 minutes, without any contention, with a few words of praise for those who made recommendations, and away we would have gone. But of course the real agenda of the government was to stack the deck, to make money king in Ontario politics. It was to Americanize the system of elections in this province. I can recall making this speech last year, about the fact that I thought this government would come in with this and issuing some press releases in the winter of this year saying: "Watch out for this to come. This is what they're about. This is what Tom Long wants. This is what Leslie Noble wants. This is what Jan Dymond wants." Who are some of the other Conservative operatives? They could tell me on the other side. Some of the big-time people in the Conservative Party want this. I can just hear Tom Long

Parliament. I understand that newspapers have a view, and now more and more it's a centralized view of these issues, it seems to me, and I can understand the editorials.

One place where I think there would be a difference is when it's in the defence of democracy. The news media almost universally, for instance, hate any kind of censorship. They feel they're the defenders of information being made available. The newspapers and the news media are very protective of their right to have access to political meetings and they hate meetings behind closed doors. So they fight for that.

What I expected when this bill came out was that there would be editorial after editorial across this province denouncing the government for making money in the process. There are those who would suggest, and I reject this completely myself of course, that it's because the large newspapers and television stations and radio stations will make more money if parties have more money to spend in a campaign, and that may influence their editorial policy in this regard. I hope that wouldn't be the case. I hope when Conrad Black, the multimillionaire media mogul, buys all these newspapers he wouldn't exercise that kind of control. I hope the people who operate the newspapers at the local level wouldn't say, "I know Conrad hasn't sent the word down, but I kind of know what he wants, so maybe I'll get rid of that soft left-wing bias that he thought was there in the editorial policy."

I think this is one case where the news media over the years have consistently stood for democracy and I am disheartened when I hear even one newspaper editorial being written in favour of this legislation, not that there aren't components of it which are acceptable and supportable — we've said that — but because there is poison in this bill. In what could have been a good bill, there are hostages which makes it a bad bill.

This represents an abuse of public power, I think. When the government has an overwhelming, massive majority to push through controversial and anti-democratic legislation, that's an abuse of public power.

This cannot pass the fairness test. Not only is it bad public policy because money will have too much of an influence in any campaign that tends to corrupt the process, but also because it's unfair. It's unfair because it stacks the deck in favour of the governing party and in favour of parties that cater to the vested interests of the richest people in this province and the most powerful people in this province, who make the largest campaign contributions, and certainly have done so to this political party, the Conservative Party of Ontario.

I was watching the other night on C-SPAN, one of those high channels on the cable television set, the American House of Representatives. A similar debate was taking place and the good friends of the Conservative Party, the Republican Party in the United States, was making the case in favour of not restricting campaign spending, of saying, "It's all right to have this money out there." In the United States, you almost have to be a multimillionaire to run for public office. There is a lot of money spent in campaigns. While there are examples of some campaigns

There was a representative, a Democrat from Mississippi, who really made an interesting case. He said: "What about the poor people of Mississippi? How does putting more and more money into the system, making money king of the system, benefit those people?" Conrad Black can make a large donation. He's got millions of dollars. He can write cheques to every riding in Ontario if he wants to; or Barmick, people like that, the people who send these big cheques to the Conservative Party — or to political parties; it doesn't matter whether it's the Conservative Party when you write the cheque. Those people can afford it, but what about poor people in the province? What about people of modest income? What about people who simply don't have the disposable amount of money to make a political contribution to a political party or a candidate? They are left out of the process.

They can be helpful by door-knocking and licking stamps, as we say, and working in a campaign office. What this government is doing with this bill is making that a diminished part of the campaign. The more you shrink the period of time for a campaign the more huge media advertising plays a role.

1620

This province will be carpet-bombed by the Conservative Party with propaganda ads, and I think, to be fair, we would call all ads propaganda during a campaign because people are putting forward their party point of view. The Conservative Party will carpet-bomb this province because they have money falling out of the coffers today. Why? Because they have catered to the wealthiest people in the province and to the most powerful people, who have said, "Thank you," in droves by sending in their money to the Conservative Party.

Do I blame those people? Probably not; that's their business. But what I'm saying is that this bill means that's going to be far more important than the person who volunteers to knock on doors, because we're shrinking the size of that campaign. We're diminishing the day-to-day personal contact and enhancing television advertising and huge newspaper, magazine and radio advertising.

There's a massive increase in the amount of money that can be spent by political parties and candidates in this province. There's a drastic increase in the amount of money that can be donated to political parties. Again, that's dangerous. Let me tell you, the more you put money into the system the more dangerous it becomes.

I heard the member for Northumberland mentioning the fund-raiser for Roy McMurtry, now the Chief Justice in Ontario, and Susan Fish. I believe this is accurate, that Patti Starr was a fund-raiser for those two people. I heard him mention her name. But whenever you bring up these connotations — Gerhard Moog, from years ago, who built the Hydro building, I think without a tender, and so on — we got out of this, Peter Munk — is that another big name I heard who gives money to the Conservative Party?

"The point I'm making is, if you allow higher contribution, you're allowing people more influence. Make no mistake about it. We'd all like to think it has no influence, but it has big-time influence when that money is coming in from the wealthiest people in the province. So don't do that to the system."

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): The unions.

Mr Bradley: Whoever it is. The member for Scarborough East comes in. I've used a quotation in the House this afternoon from his former business that he would like. I'll mention that. I'll get into that part of the speech now because he said that to me. I said that Mike Harris, when it came to spending the taxpayers' dollars on political households in Ontario at a cost of \$1.270 million, when it's spending on propaganda of this kind, he spends like Santa and he cuts like Scrooge. I knew my friend from Scarborough —

Mr Gilchrist: You must have stayed up all weekend.

Mr Bradley: I honestly didn't stay up all weekend. I was reading over some speeches on the weekend from the member for Scarborough East and it reminded me of this saying and I thought, "This is a great one to use on Monday." I couldn't wait to get in to use it. But it's true, you see, because not only is this government going to stack the deck in the Conservative Party's favour through this legislation, but already you would have received at your household, no doubt, this political propaganda pamphlet which is from the Ministry of Health.

Let me tell you, I would imagine that the civil servants — they're non-political people, except David Lindsay, I don't know — in the Ministry of Health must be experiencing sickness to the stomach when they realize they had to spend out of their budget \$1.270 million to send a propaganda pamphlet right across the province and, surprise of surprise, it's in blue and white. It's in Conservative and there's nothing critical about the government in this and there's a lot that compliments the government. What everybody should know, even the students who are in the gallery today — and there are students up in the public gallery today. Even they have helped to pay for Mike Harris's propaganda pamphlet, because they pay sales tax. When they go and buy something they pay sales tax, then they end up —

Mr Gilchrist: You're not allowed to talk to the people in the gallery.

Mr Bradley: The member is quite right, so I won't speak to them in gallery. Even the students who are in the gallery, I say to the member from Scarborough through the Speaker, have to pay for this propaganda pamphlet.

The government puts this out, and this is the taxpayers of Ontario. This is not the Conservative Party. If the St Catharines-Brock provincial riding association, which has money falling out of its coffers now, wants to spend all that. If my friend Tom Froese from time to time puts ads in, which I think his association pays for, I don't object to that, but I do object to this.

You'll recall this, Mr Speaker. This is a couple of weeks old, this pamphlet called "Are We on the Right Track?" again in blue and white. This cost three quarters of a million dollars. Then there was the ad from our good friend David Lindsay, former principal secretary to Mike Harris, former Conservative candidate in Ontario, former communications adviser to the Conservative caucus. He's fallen into good times — you'll be happy to know this, Mr Speaker — because he's now the chief executive officer of the Ontario Jobs and Investment Board. He put out a pamphlet which is clear propaganda. I had a chance to converse with him about this. He didn't see that it was propaganda, but another person who was there, who is totally objective said, "Yes, it is." So we went to Guy Giorno and asked him and Guy said, "No, it's not propaganda."

What we see is the government abusing its public office. I'm sure the former newscaster for CHCH-TV, the member for Wentworth East, must be appalled when he sees this kind of information being purveyed using the taxpayers' dollars, because I know that when he was a newscaster, I trusted him. I knew I could count on him to be critical when governments would abuse their public power in that way. I know he will, if allowed to speak in third reading debate, be up to denounce that.

We get into the fact that there are certain expenditures exempted, as though somehow some expenditures during a campaign should be exempt from any control. There's polling and there's research and there's travel. The member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Morley Kells, who has been around this House before, knows how much money can be hidden under research, polling and travel and those costs. No doubt he was worried when it came up before the caucus that that would be the case.

I think I'm losing my voice — bad news. We have one more speaker, and I've got to at least carry on until then. I know what's happening here. This propaganda: I know that there's going to be a billboard in Ontario from the taxpayers' coalition denouncing this squandering of the taxpayers' money. Frank Sheehan, my good friend from Lincoln, used to be the president of the taxpayers coalition in St Catharines, and I can tell you they would have been beside themselves over this waste of taxpayers' dollars. I expect the Ontario taxpayers' coalition, the National Citizens' Coalition, all of these people are going to be writing to the Premier, putting ads in the newspaper, on television, denouncing this misuse of government funds. I know that, because these are not politically minded people. These are not just the Conservative Party and Reform Party in disguise. These are people who genuinely care about the squandering of tax dollars, so I know that when they catch on to this issue, they will be denouncing this government for what they are doing.

They've decided to exempt — Mike Harris will be able to run around the province in a big, expensive plane now, and the Tory cabinet ministers will be able to run around the province in the Tory campaign plane, because the sky's the limit. No expenditures at all for travel, for polling and research will be counted as part of the expenditure.

tures. The sky is the limit. I can see the Tory pollsters rubbing their hands like this and saying, "More money in our pockets, and we will make donations to the Conservative Party because of that."

1630

Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock): Jim, I need

good polling in St Catharines.

Mr Bradley: The member for St Catharines-Brock

says he needs good polling in St Catharines. I would

advise him of this: Always watch behind your back.

That's what you have to do, because often the attacks

don't come from the front. I can tell my friend from St

Catharines-Brock that if he and I are in a campaign, the

attacks will come from the front, that there will be an

exchange of views from the front. He should not worry

about that. He should worry about those who work behind

his back today to try to subvert him. That's what he should

worry about today, because he knows that he and I would

carry on a very civil and fair-minded campaign, as we do.

appointment.

Interruptions:

Mr Bradley: I've got a few more things to say and my

other member isn't back yet. I have to say these things.

The central party campaign: I know the Speaker is con-

cerned about this. Not only is there a substantial increase

in what candidates can spend at the local level for media

advertising, for instance, and all other costs, but also at

the central level. Whereas now the maximum a political

party could spend centrally is \$2.7 million, that zooms up

to \$4 million under the new formula and again emphasizes

the importance of money in a campaign.

What I worry about are people just starting out in poli-

tics. Some of the people who have come to this Legislature

over the years have come from modest backgrounds and

did not have a lot of money. I can tell you that when I was

elected to this Legislature, I would have been against a

machine which would have had considerably more money

to spend and respected candidates who had run for other

parties, particularly the Conservative Party in our area

because they were in power 34 years before I was able to

secure the seat in St Catharines in 1977. There would be a

concern that that money would have a greater and greater

influence and that people of modest means would not be

able to get into politics.

Certainly in the US today, a person of modest financial

means is almost shut out of the process. I don't want to see

that in Ontario. I don't want to see that to win a nominal

local level, a person would have to have a lot of money or

be beholden to people with a lot of money in order to be

elected.

I hope they simply have their gatherings. I want to give

a little advertising to the member for St Catharines-Brock.

At the Hunter farm — is it next Saturday? — next Satur-

day at the Hunter farm in Niagara-on-the-Lake —

Mr Froese: In Queenston.

Mr Bradley: In Queenston?

Mr Froese: It's called the Hunter barbecue, but it's in

Queenston.

Mr Bradley: Okay, it's called the Hunter barbecue but

it's in Queenston this year, not on the Hunter farm. I think

the guest speaker will be Dave Johnson — I hope there

are no demonstrators there to greet him — and Hugh

Segal is going to be there. It said that on the TV screen. I

want to tell the member for St Catharines-Brock. I was

looking at community channel 10 and it said Hugh Segal

as well. So there we are.

I just wanted to say that if you were to raise some funds

at that gathering, that would be legitimate and one would

hope that would be people having a good time together

and so on, gathering together in the Conservative cause.

What I worry about is that members who run in provin-

cial politics will have to have a lot of money backing them

or a lot of money themselves to participate successfully in

the process. That is most disconcerting.

Another reason is that in the next election campaign,

and I'm sure the gurus in the Tory back rooms will know

this, the news media will not be able to cover the next

provincial election campaign as extensively and compre-

hensively as previous campaigns. Why is that? Because

there have been all kinds of cutbacks in the news media.

Look at Conrad Black's newspapers. The pattern is

simple. They come in and Conrad demands huge profits

out of the newspaper — not just modest profits and the

community good, but he demands huge profits. Therefore,

to do that, you have to shrink the workforce. If you have

fewer reporters and fewer columnists and fewer others to

cover an election campaign, that means money plays an

even bigger role. That means that those huge television

ads that run on the television stations in the middle of

hockey games or baseball games, whatever happens to be

on — many sports events — therefore it's going to play a

much more significant role. That is not good for our

society.

If, for instance, the Black empire, the Hollinger-

Southam empire owned by Black and administered from

Chicago by Mr Radler —

Mr Gilchrist: I thought you were talking about us for

a second.

Mr Bradley: That's the evil empire when you're refer-

ring to yourselves. The Black empire is something

different.

If they all decided somehow, "We have a vested inter-

est in having Mike Harris back in power," then all this

rigging of the election — and I say "rigging" not in the

sense of illegal rigging, but rigging in the sense of giving

favours to one side or the other — will have been success-

ful. Don't think Tom Long doesn't know this. He knows

Mr Froese: That has nothing to do with our policy.

Mr Bradley: Well, I don't mind contesting an election

where Tom and I are sitting on a platform — I'm talking

about Tom Froese here, not Tom Long — and exchanging

views and putting our policies forward and our views

forward and the people make their judgement. But when

party on political propaganda with taxpayers' money going to be a rigged process and not good for the demo-cratic process in this province.

If you want to see a system where influence peddling becomes rife, it's a system where you keep increasing the money that people can contribute to campaigns. There have been questions raised about the Niagara Falls casino decision. One of the reasons that questions have arisen — and of course I leave it to others to make the final judgment as to whether the charges which are made are successful or not.

Mr Gilchrist: Directly related to your future.

Mr Bradley: It that Marjory Lebreton speaking? I can't hear over there. Or was it Senator Cogger? I can't remember who these people all are. There are still a lot of people in the red chamber in Ottawa, the Senate, as it is known, the other House, who were appointed by Brian Mulroney. I was wondering how I was going to get Mulroney into this. They are appointed by Brian Mulroney. But I want to dwell on the issues that are around this time allocation motion and around this bill. The parts of the bill which deal with some of the administrative changes are quite acceptable. But the government doesn't even want the embarrassment — and I wonder if there are any democrats on that side, small "d" democrats. They don't even want to allow for the placing of amendments. Is there not anyone, Ted Arnott for instance, a good democrat, who would rise in this House and demand that his own party at least allow the placing of amendments? Or are we going to shut everybody else out from that process? It's either Mike's way or the highway. He either bulldozes it through, bullies the bill through the House, or — there's no alternative. There's no "or." That is what happens when you have Mike in charge. He doesn't even want amendments.

1640

There are people out there who have suggested to those of us in the opposition some amendments that could be made to the legislation. For instance, I think it's good to have an independent election finances commission overseeing election finances, the contributions and expenditures in this province. Indeed it was Dalton Camp, a Conservative adviser, under the Camp commission, which had on it a representative of the New Democratic Party and a representative of the Liberal Party, who came forward with the recommendation to establish the election finances commission of Ontario. This government has decided it's going to abolish that, where there was at least some political representation there to ensure some kind of fairness, and put it under the chief electoral officer, where there is not that kind of input from the political parties who are represented in this House.

This bill is a major step backwards. It's a step in the direction of making money paramount in our election campaigns. I know that if he's not in this House after the next election for some reason or other — decides to retire, may be defeated or some reason, simply wants to go back

to his old vocation — Ed Doyle, one of my favourite TV commentators, will be giving a comment on channel 11 news, CHCH. I hope he's got a possibility of returning. But I would hope he would be making a speech or giving a commentary against this legislation, which is most anti-democratic.

I'm running out of voice. I know that is worrying people.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Would you check for a quorum, please.

The Acting Speaker: Would you check for a quorum, please.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for St Catharines.

Mr Bradley: I want to thank the member for Fort York for recognizing that there was not a quorum at the time and wanting to get a quorum in the House.

What I can say as I get into the last few minutes of this address to the assembly is that, first of all, we are dealing with a closure motion, a motion which will slam the door on debate on the election finances bill, a bill which radically changes the way we operate in elections in Ontario to make money have an even more important role in that campaign and to place us in the danger of increasing the influence of those who make significant contributions to political campaigns.

I want to emphasize again that it will encourage political parties to cater to the wealthiest people in the province or to the most powerful interests, which have the money to donate to those political parties, to the chagrin of the farming community, for instance, which may not have the same amount of money as Argus Corp or one of the banks or the Hollinger corporation or something of that nature.

Hon Diane Cunningham (Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): You are dating yourself.

Mr Bradley: The member for London North says that when I say "Argus" I'm dating myself, because that used to be the one that everybody mentioned. Well, that's probably good. It's okay to do that.

But we are placing more and more influence in the hands of fewer and fewer people, those being the vested interests in the province. So when farmers are trying to resist the urbanization of farm areas in this province with huge proposed developments, they will find that those who pay the piper will be calling the tune. In other words, the huge developers who are contributing to the Conservative Party may have more influence on the land use decisions of the province than the individual farmers who wish to preserve the farm land for the purposes of farming. That certainly worries me to a very great extent.

I believe we will have to look to the news media in this province to analyse this bill carefully and make its views

the major points between the three parties represented in the House? Second, why are they so intent on pushing this piece of legislation, having brought it in that way, to the point of going to the extent of using time allocation, not only to ensure that this bill will get through before this week of sittings is over and we break for the summer recess, but of having this legislation become adopted into law without any process of committee, without any ability to analyse the content, without any ability for the public to have its say on these changes?

1650

I have a couple of notions why the government is doing that. The government would like us to believe that this is simply a case of them updating the laws, bringing the spending limits more or less up to date with inflation, looking at the federal parameters for spending and making these changes more or less on a par with those. Therefore they keep saying, "This bill hasn't been changed for a number of years; it requires change," to which I would say for bringing in a piece" — there's certainly lots of legislation that is older than this law that hasn't been amended that should be amended, that is much more important to amend than this piece of legislation, but the government seems intent on coming forward with this.

Why, if two of the political parties that together received more than 50% of the votes in the last election are saying to the governing party, "We don't think that you should be proceeding" —

Mr Beaubien: That is not a fact.

Mr Sillipo: I'm sorry. I said the two parties that are

sitting in the opposition.

Mr Beaubien: There were other parties.

Mr Sillipo: That's right, there were other parties.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Interjection.

Mr Sillipo: The point is that there is a large number, if not a majority, of people representing certainly the two other parties in this House, who represent the majority in terms of the popular vote, who are saying to the members opposite: "We don't think this bill is necessary. We don't think you should be rushing through with this law. We think that many of the pieces, if you took the time to look at them, you would agree with us that it's inappropriate to proceed with them in any event. So why is the government in such a hurry?"

We've heard many allegations, many changes, many notions to the effect that the government is interested in buying the election. I don't want to go to that level of rhetoric, although quite frankly I think there is a lot of truth to that notion. But I want to say to the government: "Why is it that you need to change the election laws so that you can spend an additional \$1.4 million over what you have been able to spend in the last election? What has changed about the configuration of Ontario that warrants that kind of change?"

Although the government may be able to justify on the election finances side increasing the expenditures to take into account the changes in the ridings, even there I would

known. Had we had editorial after editorial, had we had commentary from the crusty talk show hosts, about how this is going to influence this province, then I'm sure that we would have, not this bill, but this bill withdrawn, and that the government would have allowed amendments, as it should allow amendments, to this legislation.

Surely there are two basic rights we look forward to that are democratic when any bill is coming forward: One would be the opportunity for members of all political parties to offer amendments to legislation, and second, to have public hearings so the public can have input.

Mike Harris has slammed the door shut on both of those opportunities. Mike Harris wants to ensure with this bill that his party, which is receiving an unprecedented amount of money from powerful and rich interests in this province, will have a leg up on the two opposition parties, will have a distinct advantage over all other parties in the election campaign. He will be ensuring, unfortunately — I don't think he wants this to be the case; I would not want to attribute this as a motive — that money will play a more important role in decision-making in government. The more money people can donate to political parties, the more money corporations can put into the system, the more their influence will be on governments.

Despite the fact we would all like to believe that isn't the case, it indeed is the case. I only wish that the defenders of democracy, the people within the news media — perhaps they simply weren't aware this bill was in existence — had stood up against this kind of legislation that is detrimental to the democratic system in this province, that is an abuse of power by a government which seems bound and determined that it will bulldoze its way across this province, not looking at the consequences of its actions in the long term, but only at the short-term interests of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario.

I hope the people of this province will remember this bill, which was brought in quietly and behind another bill and hurt our democratic process, on election day.

Mr Sillipo: I rise to speak to this time allocation motion and want to say at the outset that I'll be sharing my time with my colleague from Fort York and my colleague from Hamilton Centre.

This time allocation motion, as has already been pointed out by previous speakers, in effect shuts down debate on a piece of legislation that changes the election system and the election rules in Ontario. It has normally been the kind of thing that has happened — that is, changes to election finances and the rules around elections — as a result of general agreement, of a high degree of, if not complete consensus, among the political parties represented in the Legislature. That is the way in which it has happened historically. We've had a departure from that in this particular instance.

The first question that it is appropriate to ask is, why? Why is the government so intent on proceeding with these allocation motion, bringing in, first of all, legislation without, let alone consensus, any degree of agreement on

There is obviously something that's different, and what is different, of course, is the three years that we have had now and the almost four years that I guess we'll have of the Mike Harris government before the next election. They know that what they have to do is be able to control to a far greater degree than they do now all of the rules and all of the climate around elections, because that's the way in which they believe they can get themselves re-elected.

We are going to have a situation where we have a shorter election period, and at the end of the day only Mike Harris will know (a) exactly how long it's going to be, and (b) exactly when it's going to be. We are going to have a government that is going to be able to spend more money and, quite frankly, they are going to be able to raise that money, because they are also increasing the amounts that each individual and each company particularly can donate to political parties. They are setting up the rules so they will be able to spend far more money in a time frame that is shorter than the last election.

Those are two very basic differences from what exists even at the federal level, because when you compare the federal amount that you can spend, you have to bring it back to the shorter campaign period that we will have now, and while people may say, "Well, 28 days, isn't that long enough?" maybe it is and maybe it isn't.

The reality is that the current time frame usually means that you have at least a week to get things going. People begin to think about the fact that there's an election. Yes, there's the issue of the enumeration lists, and actually that's the one thing that has been going forward that I find acceptable, which is the move towards a permanent voters' list. I want to say that, because if there is a permanent voters' list that is constantly updated — that's the key thing, because otherwise you just get into the same kind of nightmare that we have had with the lists that have been made up at each election. Even with a permanent voters' list, we are still going to have a situation where if the rules aren't fair enough, one party, in this case the Conservative Party, is going to have a big leg up on the rest of the political field.

I would think that has got to be one of the basic reasons why the government is going to this extreme step to bring in this piece of legislation in the way they have done, to not be willing to allow, even within these very strict confines of the crazy time lines that they have set, members of the opposition to put amendments to this bill, which could have been done, as I said to the government members, even within their constraints by allowing some time in committee of the whole. Even that they're not prepared to do.

We have set out a number of amendments — certainly our leader and our caucus chair, the member for Hamilton Centre, who has been taking a lead for us on this and has been doing a fabulous job in terms of putting forward these ideas, defending in effect the need for rules that are fair, for rules that are equitable, for rules that allow all political parties and all candidates a fair opportunity to put their cases before the electors — and the government just simply is deciding that they're not going to listen.

quibble with some of the changes that have been made. For example, the new spending limits, even as they were recommended earlier by the commission and now as changed by the government in its proposal, were based on the premise that since we now are going to have ridings that are more or less equal in numbers, the old formula of starting with a lower amount per riding and then building on top of that a funding formula that would allow parties and candidates to spend a certain amount of money, that theory doesn't apply because now we have ridings that are more or less the same size in terms of residents.

That may be true in terms of residents, but I can tell you, coming from the riding that has, I believe, the lowest proportion, not of residents — the residents of the new riding of Davenport are going to be about the same — but when you look at the number of voters that are in that riding, the current estimate is about \$45,000, and in fact it's the riding with, I believe, the lowest number of voters per riding. That's because we have a high population of people who are not yet Canadian citizens, although they pay their taxes just like the rest of us do and of course need to be served just like the rest of us, whether you represent them provincially, federally or locally.

The reason I raise that issue is that had we had the opportunity to look at this bill through committee, we could have looked at some of those issues in terms of the differences that there are and we would have been able to have an opportunity to see if this kind of flat amount per riding is in fact what makes sense. Because despite the fact that the commission has looked at it and despite the fact that the notion seems to be straightforward and seems to be equitable, I still think there are some problems, as I have had a chance to look at it again from the initial look I say to the government members that there is but one small example of something that warrants a different, more in-depth examination. But having said that, I want to come back to my main point, because on that score I could live even with the flat rate. It's not my preferred amount, my preferred way to go, but it certainly is not going to throw things completely out of line. Where I have a real problem, where I come back to the point that I was making a few moments ago, is this increase of the central party expenditures, because again, what the government tries to say is, "We're simply bringing that into line with the federal election proposals and amounts."

But there are different circumstances that apply there. There's a very different reality. The question I would put again to the government members is this: What has changed since the last provincial election that warrants the need for the government and the Tory caucus and the Tory party to feel that they need election rules that allow them to spend in this coming election almost \$1.5 million more than they were able to spend in the last election? The province hasn't changed dramatically in terms of the number of voters to warrant that kind of significance; in fact, if you want to look at it simply in the number of additional voters, that would have been picked up under the old formula as well.

"I'm not particularly surprised by that. I'm not particularly surprised to see a government that is refusing to listen even to the most reasonable of positions. Quite frankly, I have stopped being surprised by the tactics that the government uses. They continue to try to give us half of the truth and to leave out the other half of the story, and expect us and the public to be gullible enough to just simply take their half statement as being the whole truth."

We have continued on a day-to-day basis to point out that the shorter campaign period was not part of the recommendations that came forward from the election finances commission, making sure, for example, that all parties have an equal right to get to voters' lists; that all have a provision that allows parties to buy additional voters' lists or to get updated voters' lists and use them for their own exclusive use is not something that should be brought in, and various other amendments.

We have listed, I believe, some 27 or 29 various amendments that we have found in this bill that were not part of the commission's recommendations. Why do I say that? Because one of the lines the government has been using in this whole discussion to force this thing through has been that what they're doing is (a) updating this to the federal rules, and (b) simply following what the commission had recommended. They go to great pains to point out that the commission has been a tripartite body in terms of the representatives there being appointed from the three political parties, that in fact the current chair is a former active member of the New Democratic Party, forgetting of course that he is now in a non-partisan position as chair of the commission, that he's not a partisan appointee in that sense.

Even leaving aside the fact that for a government that continues to rely on the commission as the basis for why it's bringing forward this piece of legislation and many of the changes in it, they are then turning around and abolishing that same commission, even leaving that aside, the reason we have been highlighting this issue has been to continue to point out to the public that many of these significant changes that the Tories are bringing forward are not things the commission recommended. What the government has done is simply taken a number of the recommendations the commission made, added to those some of these very significant twists, at the heart of which is the combination of being able to spend more money as a party together with a shorter campaign period, and they have completely changed the nature of the package that's in front of us. They have refused to have the bill go out to committee, and then they are insisting on ramming this piece of legislation through with the excuse or the rationale that it has to be done so the political parties, the commission and the election office can start to gear up for an election.

I remember other debates, not but a few days ago, when members opposite were saying, "The election's not for another two years, so what's the rush?" What's the rush? I say to the government members, If we've got all of this time, then why do you need to ram this piece of legislation

through now? Why have you refused to even allow us to put some of the amendments that we had wanted to? What's the rush?

The rush I think is twofold. First is that it's not going to be two years until the next election. Maybe that's the only good news in this whole thing, because voters will get to judge Mike Harris long before two years from now, I suspect. I think some time in the next 12 months is more realistic, but time will tell. But more significant than that is the fact that because the government wants to at least keep its doors open, keep its options open, and second, wants to be ready in the event, because they will have an election some time in the next 12 months, what the government is doing, what the Tory party is doing through this legislation is crafting the rules so they will be able to influence voters by being able to spend more money.

I wish I could say that's something at the end of the day that doesn't make a lot of difference, but experience tells me it does make some difference. Will the Tories be able to buy the election? Will they be able to actually control completely what voters have to say in the next election? I hope not, and I don't think so at the end of the day.

There are two things we've seen happen in the last couple of elections. The first is that during the first part of the election campaign, the people decide whether they're going to vote in favour of or against the existing party. For the last couple of elections, we've seen in fact the electorate decide in the first couple of weeks it was pretty clear they were going to vote against the party in government. Then the next decision in the second part of the campaign comes: Which of the other two parties are they going to go for? I think again the only good news I can take going into this next election is that it seems that a majority of voters have already decided they don't want to see Mike Harris re-elected, and it's in fact because of that — we know there's still a choice that people will have to make between the Liberals and the New Democrats and we will, of course, over the next number of months continue to talk to people about why we as New Democrats believe we are the only true alternative to what Mike Harris is doing.

But I want to stay on the election finances law and on the election laws today. Maybe that's also one of the reasons why Mike Harris and his cohorts are pushing this law, knowing they've got a chunk of people who, yes, approve of what they're doing, but they've also got a large number of people very angry at them. They believe what they need to do is to stack the rules as strongly as they can in their favour, use the kind of advertising approach that we have seen them do now with two or three major things — the last one that is going out to people's doors now is health care — and do all that in the buildup to the election, then knowing, as Mike Harris and his advisers will know, when they're going to pull the plug and when they're going to call the election, to be ready to go, to spend a pile of money that will get them through.

All I can say, as I conclude my comments, is I hope at the end of the day the Ontario electorate will see through

all of that. I hope and trust that the Ontario electorate will continue to exercise its ongoing wisdom and stay true to where at least the majority of voters are now, which is that Mike Harris is the worst thing that has happened to this province, that the Mike Harris agenda is the worst thing that has happened to this province in memory and that the last thing we need and want is the re-election of the Mike Harris government.

But they need to be wary that the government of Mike Harris will do everything in their power to give half the story, half the truth, and to try to paint that half of the story as being the whole truth. We need to understand that's what this is all about and the election finances changes this government is so intent in pushing through are part and parcel of that pre-election and election strategy, because these guys — and they are mainly "these guys" — want to make sure they've got the rules all set up in their favour so they can just try to ram things through in the next election, just like they've rammed through various pieces of legislation in this House.

I say again, I believe and hope that at the end of the day the Ontario electorate will be wiser and smarter and not let Mike Harris get away with that.

Mr Marchese: I must admit, like the member for Dovercourt, I have similar questions. He asks why they've got to tell you, when the government introduced this act I thought it was an act of political idiocy, a foolhardy act. Why would they do it at this time? I thought it was a very risky thing to do because at a time when you want to coast, because you're going to be calling the election very soon, in a short period of time, why would you want to risk political suicide by telling the public you are about to engage in some skulduggery? So I too questioned the nature of their political judgement, but they continue to surprise me. It is a party of surprises, I tell you, and this bill is a surprise to me.

I've got to say, there have been a number of members who have talked about the whiz kids behind the scenes. They're not the ones really. The one behind the forces of darkness is Mike Harris in particular, who epitomizes and is the embodiment of these problems I am about to speak of, but the real forces of darkness are the ones with the big pockets, the deep pockets. I will speak to this issue in terms of the substantive changes this government has made and how that connects to the people with the big bucks and how that connects them to these Tories, because there is a connection here.

The real enemy here, where the forces of darkness are embodied, is Mike Harris, the Premier. It's not the whiz boys. They come up with a few ideas, but in the end it is the Premier who decides what goes ahead and what doesn't. It isn't the few young men or women they have behind the scenes. It isn't they; it is mon ami M. Harris, the Premier. He's got the power and essentially he decides. I tell you, I was surprised by this move. I've got to bring a soccer analogy to give some lucidity to this matter. *Interjection.*

But try to understand the rules of the game, to get you to connect to this Bill 36, as a way of showing how rep-tilian this act is. We have two teams, one on either side, and there are lines that define where players play. On either side there are two goalposts. What you have here normally — well, you always have it. It's not "normally"; it's part of the game. You have a referee. The referee decides when someone has committed a foul, and there are three types of things the referee will call. He will call a penalty shot when somebody in the penalty area trips another player. The referee is there to say, "There's a penalty here."

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): A green card. **Mr Marchese:** With a green card, exactly. But if it's a really foul play you get a red card and you're out for a couple of games. In that penalty area, if a member of the team that is about to score gets tripped or something like that, the referee is there to say, "Foul play, penalty"; or if the ball goes out of the boundaries, out of those white lines, one of the two teams, depending on who kicked it out, gets to throw the ball, and that's called a throw-in back into the game; or if someone trips but it's not a major trip, it's a free kick for the team or the player who had been the victim, he shoots the free kick. These are the rules of the game, but there's a referee to make sure that the rules are upheld. That's a playing field that is even for both teams.

What we've got in this place are three political parties, and the election finances commission comes up with some ideas that they propose to the government, based on the input of the various political parties, and at the end of that they're negotiated. These things have been dealt with in 1975 and 1986 on the basis of a playing field that is fair, and we expected in this particular instance to be playing by some rules. We expected that. Our member for Hamilton Centre was quite prepared to go to that meeting to discuss and negotiate what reasonable things the election finances commission had proposed that we might support or agree or disagree with and try to come up with an agreement that all parties agreed with. That's part of the fair game. Like soccer, we have a referee, based on rules.

In this particular instance, what Mike Harris, the Premier, has done is that he has decided to play the referee. The referee no longer is neutral. We don't know what kind of call the referee's going to make, because the Premier, not a neutral person, is calling the shots. Do you see, by following the rules, how that can be completely unfair?

You can't have the Premier who decides the rules. You

need a neutral referee.

Not only that, but what M. Harris, the Premier, has

done is that he has decided: "I, as the referee, decree that there will be no goalposts on our side. The other side will have goalposts, but on our side there will be no goalposts, meaning they won't know how to score against us. Only we, the government, will know how to score because me, Mikey, I'm the referee and I shoot against those two goalposts set there in the field." You see, he's eliminated the goalposts.

I hope that the lesson in soccer, as brief as it was, gives a clear sense, for those who are watching some soccer games, of what we're talking about. There are rules, and FIFA, the international organization, sets those rules. Referees are there for that specific purpose, to make sure that both sides have an equal ability to play the game.

What M. Harris has done here — even if you can't follow all of the details of Bill 36, you get an idea of why I call this bill a republican act, "act" both in terms of action and in terms of a bill. You heard me use this word "repetilian," but it applies in this case, because it is underhanded, it is slippery, it is serpentine in nature. They're bypassing a process that we abide by, generally speaking, so the rules can be fair to all at all times.

We've been through government and we left government — at least the people decided that we shouldn't be government — and it will happen to them too. It's a question of time. If it isn't this time, which I hope it is, it'll be the next, and then they will have to face these undermocratic rules we are about to face.

Why repetilian? Because we had a process and they bypassed this process. The process would have deemed that we should be part of that negotiating table, agreeing, as political parties, what is acceptable to all of us. They decide here in this particular case that there will be no hearings. Why would they do that, unless they know full well that this would be found by the public to be an unacceptable act.

They wanted to have several weeks of hearings on the Condominium Act, an act that all three political parties agree on. Don't you find that absurd, that on matters upon which we agree they want to have hearings and on matters of fundamental difference they decide they don't need hearings?

This is a bill where there are fundamental differences here that give that side the unfair advantage. They are like the hooligans in some of those soccer games, where they cause chaos in the streets and in the stadium. You might shrug and say, "No, it's not comparable," but it is like that when you break the rules. When you change the rules and set the rules to fit your own political partisanship, you behave no differently from any other hooligan in the street. That's why we say that if you're going to be fair and you want to give hearings on something that all of us agree on, then give hearings to those things that need to be dealt with, not just by political parties but by the general public.

On the whole issue of process, we have talked about that. My colleague from Hamilton Centre has talked about that before. Many other members have touched on this as acceptable. But on the issue of substance — and this too has been touched upon; the member for Dufferin just touched on it — political parties can now spend \$1.3 million centrally, from the central campaign. Who do you think that will benefit? It benefits the parties that are able to raise money.

Now, how do we raise money? New Democrats raise it from individual membership, people who are faithful to the political ideology we represent.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North): Unions.

Mr Marchese: The member for Brampton North says unions. He's right. We get 15% of support from unions.

Mr Spina: That's all, 15%?

Mr Marchese: That is all. Listening to him, from Brampton North, he'll make you think that millions are pouring into our coffers for an election. Fifteen per cent; the rest comes from individual contributions.

The Liberals are different. They have individual contributions, but much of their money too comes from deep pockets, corporate pockets. They'll want to pretend it's just the Tories who have corporate friends. They do too; they've got lots of corporate friends.

1720

But the real corporate party is opposite to me where the forces of evil are on the other side. Their connection to the corporations is symbiotic. It is almost inseparable. They are so closely connected, you need a chisel to break them apart. You need a chisel to break that union that exists between the corporations and them. They'll pretend it isn't true. They'll say they support the little guy; some of them are red Tories and they really care about the little guy and so on. Right?

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): Not very many.

Mr Marchese: There aren't too many that I can think of, but I must admit they must have some of those kinds of people who support them, for sure.

But their corporate buddies are the ones these people support. The \$1.3 million central funding is designed to get a few more bucks from their friends. Do you remember M. Harris, the Premier, when he held that little conference with the big boys? He said to them, "You've been there with us, you've stood by me, you've stood by the Tories, and we're going to be there to stand by you when you need us," meaning, "When I need you guys, you'll be there, and when you need me, I'll be there for you." It's symbiotic. That's what it's all about, and they're going to get the money to have a good central campaign, make no mistake about it.

In addition, what they have done is permit the corporations to give a little more, because the limit used to be \$7,000. It's now \$15,000. Isn't that nice? Little individuals can contribute — if you contribute up to \$200, you get 75% back, right? But we don't have corporate friends to go to. Besides that, I don't want to go to any of them for

support. I wouldn't want to be connected in that way to the

corporations. I would feel —

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): No. You would

rather go to the big unions.

Mr Marchese: The member for Kitchener wasn't here

when I said it. We get 15% of support from the unions.

Mr Wettlaufer: You get big bucks from the corporations.

Mr Wettlaufer: You get big bucks from the big

unions, but you don't get any support from their members.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Interjection: The BMW club.

Mr Marchese: The BMW club indeed.

So we increase the amount that is rebateable from

\$7,000 to \$15,000, but that's okay, isn't it? Sure. It's

democracy. It's corporate democracy. It's capitalism at its

best. It works so well. "We give to the corporations and

the corporations give us back something." You have one

of the ministers saying: "This isn't about money. Money

does not buy elections. This is not what we are doing

here."

Minister, please. The act speaks for itself. The act says

you are increasing the contribution that a corporation can

make. Isn't that designed to get more from them so you

can have a better campaign? Oh, please: "This isn't about

money." What does that mean, it isn't about money? This

is a minister of the crown. We're not just talking about

anybody. This is a minister saying this kind of stuff.

You've got to worry.

Mr Pouliot: It's about buying the election.

Mr Marchese: "It's about buying the election." Oh,

we can't have that. Minister Hodgson wouldn't say that.

He would say: "It's not about money. It's about" — what

would he say? I don't know, because he was asked some

questions today, and he babbled here and there. He blab,

blab, blabbed through the whole thing. We kept on saying

to the minister, "Minister, did you answer the question

that my colleague from Hamilton Centre asked?" and he

was stone-faced, blab, blab, blab.

The problem with New Democrats is that we used to

answer questions. We used to answer every question that

was asked of us. We had some exceptions, like my friend

from Nipigon, who is an excellent speaker, excellent at

answering questions, but I'll tell you, people admired him

when he spoke, because at least he had something beauti-

ful to say each and every time.

But some of these guys — blab, blab, blab, blab, blab,

day in and day out. I tell you, Speaker, you don't know the

pain I go through surviving question period daily. Surviv-

ing it is a real victory for me. I'm not sure how it is for the

people watching this program, but I've got to tell you, it's

painful to be here, and not just for question period. You

should listen to some of the speeches. When you hear

some of the speeches from the other side, I tell you, it's

difficult to take. I've got to contain myself. You know

what I mean. Speaker. People watching know what I

mean. They say: "Mr Marchese is right. He knows exactly

what I feel."

They're ramming it through. They're ramming it

through for a purpose, and they're muzzling us by calling

a time allocation motion. Why do you do that? You don't

want the general public to know what is going on, because

that's what taking this bill to the public means. You take

the bill all around Ontario to give people an opportunity to

review your bill and to comment on the bill. That's what

it's about. When you time-allocate, you are essentially

putting a coffin on the entire bill. That's what you're

doing. That's why we're upset on this side, because we

want people to have an opportunity.

The member for Hamilton Centre as well earlier on

said that a particular section allows a political party to pay

for a special revision of the voters' list and they get to

have exclusive use of that particular list. It's connected to

the whole point of having an extra \$1.3 million that the

party has access to in order to be able to do things of this

nature.

They also want to abolish the election finance commis-

sion as part of this bill. Why would they do that? We

believe this election finance commission is fair, inasmuch

as they get input from people, rightly or wrongly at times,

because often some of the members may not have the full

information at their disposal to make informed decisions,

but that's another matter. That's why that comes back to

the political parties for debate. But these guys, forces of

evil on the other side again, want to eliminate the election

finance commission, to be replaced by a government-

appointed chief electoral officer, appointed by them no

less.

You should see, in the government agencies committee

— we meet every Wednesday, and I've got to tell you,

they're all Tories that I have to deal with in there. Their

appointments are all Tories, God bless them all. Some are

nice people, no doubt, but they're all Tories.

I recall that when I was in that committee they would

bring — it's like they had German shepherds there at the

door sniffing out New Democrats. I've got to tell you, they

did — German shepherds sniffing out New Democrats. As

soon as a New Democrat came in, they said, "Ah, we got

one." And then you had the other German shepherds in-

side the committee dealing with this particular issue.

Member for Dovercourt, do you know what I mean? Of

course, I understand that.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): Do you want a

quorum call?

Mr Marchese: No, we're fine.

Speaker, this is what we're talking about. Their elected

appointee would be a Tory, for sure, that Premier Mike

Harris would appoint. That is why these 23 additions that

were made by Harris — not the little guys behind the

scenes, but Harris —

Mr Pouliot: The big guy.

Mr Marchese: The big guy. These 23 additions made

by him, not the commission, need to be taken out for

hearings. If people watching have a sense of what we're

talking about, a sense of injustice being committed in this

House, I urge you to call Mike Harris, the Premier, and

tell him that you find these actions completely undermo-

cratic and that you disagree with them so much you will

end up not supporting some of these guys.

"There is so much more to say, but the member for Hamilton Centre would like to say a few things so I cede the floor to him.

1730

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): First

of all, let me compliment my colleagues, both the members for Fort York and Davenport, for the excellent review of what's going on here. It's difficult. We're down to, at this moment, 17 minutes and 33 seconds away from the end of any kind of participation by anybody on the planet with regard to the rules and financing of the next election. It's almost a surreal moment.

Here we have a situation where the government claims in the latter part of their term that they have every right and no other alternative than to ram through changes to how we run elections and how they're financed, yet the reality is that the law doesn't take effect until January 1, 1999. It doesn't take effect until that date; it's right in the legislation. The Premier said earlier this year that there will not be an election in 1998. He can of course change his mind, or perhaps — oh, I can't use unparliamentary language, but there are other explanations why he would say that and then it may not become the reality.

But in following the tradition of this place, if we take the Premier at his word, then his word is that there is no election this year. Add to that the fact that the bill doesn't take effect until January 1, 1999. Add to that the fact that in the history of laws that regulate elections and the financing of them, there has never been a change that didn't have the support of all the parties. Add to that the fact that there are 23 major, substantive recommendations, soon to be law, in Bill 36 that were not part of the election finances commission report. Of course it is that report that the government says gives them the moral authority to ram that legislation through.

There is no way that anyone who (a) cares about democracy in Ontario and (b) takes a look at the real facts, not the rhetoric, of what's going on here can conclude that this is anything other than fixing the next election so that the Mike Harris Tories have a built-in advantage going into the next election. It's the only explanation. Nothing else holds up.

To be very frank about this, had they followed the election finances commission report to the T, we would have been in an awkward political situation. That has already been reported in the media, and I acknowledge that, because there are representatives from all three parties on there, and they all did sign on, at least publicly. We know that behind the scenes — they do things in camera — there was debate and differences, but it has been the culture and the history of that commission that they would be paying a tremendous price for that politically, but that's just the way it is. My point is, had the government done that, then it would have been a lot more difficult for us to, quite frankly, be credible and legitimate in some of the most powerful impacts on the next election are not part of that commission report. It didn't come from

anywhere other than the whiz kids in the Premier's office and the backroom people in the PC Party.

What's infuriating for us is that this is happening at exactly the same time that the same anti-democratic procedure is being used on a vicious piece of anti-labour legislation. On Thursday we debated the closure of debate, the snuffing out of any kind of input by the public, or the opposition for that matter, on the labour bill — the anti-labour bill more accurately. Now we're going through the same thing here tonight. This is about the government imposing its will, using its majority to stifle any opposition.

There's only one thing that matters to the government right now in my opinion, and that's Thursday night. Thursday night is the goal line. The point of getting to the reason the government is prepared to do what on the surface appears unfathomable — it's incredible that anybody would do this — that the only reason they're doing it is because their thinking is, "If we can just hang on till Thursday night the labour law becomes the law of the land and we've taken care of our corporate buddies, and the new election laws that nobody else had any input into also become the law of the land." The hope is that you trigger past Thursday night, people get into the summer months and they forget all about it. That's the game plan: just hunker down, get through the rest of this week, and then get out into the summer months and hope that people forget.

Unfortunately, there seem to be an awful lot of people who don't relate these two pieces of legislation, in particular the election finances, but also the anti-labour law, to their own lives. I think they see it as what's called inside baseball; it's just inside fighting. It's like when levels of government are bickering. The vast majority of the public tune out, they just glaze over.

Transfer payments don't mean a lot unless you're in government. That has changed, given the fact that people now understand that transfer payments, downloading, do have relevance to their lives, incredible relevance, because in every community, including my own of Hamilton-Wentworth, citizens are faced with reduced services and increased property taxes. That's real. When you try to sign up your child for little league and it's either not there or you're paying a user fee that you didn't have to before, particularly if you can't afford it, that has relevance to people. When we start talking over \$100 a year minimum increases in property tax, that has relevance to people.

This legislation ought to have the same kind of relevance. First of all, I don't think people actually have internalized and accepted the nature of what's happening here, that the laws and the rules of the next election are being changed unilaterally and arbitrarily by the majority party in power. That changes the meaning of the election and I believe in some significant ways it'll affect the outcome of that election — more money, less time, more ability to put on more ads.

Remember the hate ads in the last election? Don't kid yourself. Right now with all the limits off on any kind of polling and research, they're studying right now in the pre-election period where those emotional hot buttons are. Never mind the real matters of the day, the substantive policy issues. What they want are the hot buttons, to find that would make you angry, as there are in all our lives. If they can focus in on those issues with enough detail and then hit you and us with those messages over and over, they know they'll get a reaction. If they can play on that reaction, they can affect what you do in the ballot box.

How many people watching tonight voted for Mike Harris? They're probably feeling very bad, I hope, and a little bit ashamed that they were taken in. But how many people voted for one or two things they heard Mike Harris say in the election and then found out afterwards: "My God, I didn't know it meant all of this. I just didn't know?"

Let me tell you, that didn't happen by accident; that happened because they focused their advertising on those messages, because they knew it would evoke an emotional reaction. When we respond to emotion, most of us will set aside reason, set aside rational thought and react to our emotions. A lot of that emotion was about finding people to blame: "If we just go after those people, then we know" —

Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre): What about the Agenda for People? What about that?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Order, please.

Mr Christopherson: You can hear them starting to heckle. I think I'm touching a nerve, that's why they're

heckling.

The fact of the matter is, that's what this is all about. It's all about allowing them to use the one advantage they have over all of us, and that is, the ability to raise big money real quick. But that's only good if you can spend it. Raising big money under our laws is not of much use if you can't spend it. So in order to maximize this benefit they have, they need to change the rules. And because they don't want to face public criticism that these rules — particularly those that are outside the commission's recommendations — favour them, and the fact that the House rises on Thursday evening, they're prepared to hunker down, take the heat and take all of what we've been giving them here today. Whatever else might go out in print in terms of the media, they're prepared to take all of that because it gives them a whole new set of rules that lets them take a huge advantage over the opposition, both by being the government, in terms of the timing of the election and the shortness of it, and also the fact that they're the party that has taken care of their corporate friends and those friends are going to repay them with lots of cash.

That's one of the reasons, for instance, the corporate donations have doubled. That wasn't recommended by the commission; they thought that up. Do you think that's

something we would dream up? It's something the Tories dreamed up to suit themselves.

That's why we're so infuriated, because they've changed the rules of the House so that we can't do anything procedurally that would hold this up and force them into public hearings; like we did with Bill 26, where we had to hijack the House to force the government. We hijacked this House and we said, "We are not letting go until you give the people of Ontario some kind of say on what you're doing in Bill 26." Remember, that's the bill that created the Health Services Restructuring Commission that's going across Ontario shutting down hospitals. We can't do that any more. Those rules are changed.

Talk about Winston Churchill's comment about the Iron Curtain, there's an iron curtain that was drawn down the centre of this place here. On the government side are all the rights and privileges that all members used to have, and on this side of the House there are a few crumbs left, and that's about it; nothing that really matters or gets in the way of power.

I'm informed that they've tabled another time allocation motion — is that right? — on the red tape bills. We know what the group of environmentalists said today about regulations in the environment that have been dismantled. So here it goes: Another few days left in the House, another time allocation motion.

I've only got a few minutes left. I want to say right now, though, and I want to make sure that it's clearly understood — I mentioned it in a member's statement — that this government has every responsibility to take that Bill 36 out to summer hearings. There's no reason you can't bring it back in the fall as a priority if you wish, but give the people of Ontario the opportunity to be heard on their own bill. But that's not going to happen for all the reasons I said earlier.

What you've done also by ramming this through is deny other pieces of legislation an opportunity to be heard. We have a bill in front of this House, the Hamilton-Wentworth restructuring bill introduced by my colleague from the Liberal Party, the member for Hamilton East — and I commend him for introducing that bill. The minister said he supports it. That's real money and real services in my community of Hamilton-Wentworth, and this government said there's not enough time to do it because they've got other priorities. And what are those priorities? Ramming through legislation and ensuring that a day like today is used up approving a motion that kills any debate: no amendments, no public hearings, no democracy. That's why Hamilton-Wentworth can't get their bill through this place, and a whole lot of other bills that matter to people. I guess we just have to accept it, because the only ones who could do anything about this are the public. The media of late have reported on this; in fact, I believe one of the things that twiggled this was an article by Ian Urquhart of the Star, so to be fair, they have at least given it reasonable play. Obviously, we'd like to have seen more, but there have been editorialists and there have been columnists commenting on it; we'd like to have seen it bigger, of course. The only way this can really change is if

the public says to the government: "You can't do this. This is not your province and your personal property to do with as you please. We all own this province." When it comes to having an election where we decide under our system who are the very fortunate people who have the privilege and honour of serving in this House — and it is a real privilege and a real honour — then that should matter to people.

We would care if this was South Africa and they did this, or in some other place where they're just starting out a democracy. We'd say: "Oh, they came so close. If only the government of the day or the ruling party hadn't tilted it so that real democracy couldn't come through." That's what's happening here, and this government is betting that you don't care. They're betting you don't care, and if you don't, get used to this, because there'll be a lot more. Why wouldn't there be? The tyranny of the majority: That's what we face in Ontario, and it's despicable.

Mr Gilchrist: I'm pleased to add a few more comments and perhaps lower the volume of commentary in here today. For anyone watching at home, I can confirm we actually do have microphones here, but the member opposite decides to just increase the volume of his comments to make up for the lack of quality.

He also conveniently leaves aside, consistently, that this government has one opportunity that his government did not have: We were able to learn from all of your mistakes. If you think somehow that we're consumed with the idea that by putting a bill through today, people will forget over the summer, that strategy didn't work for you. You didn't sit the entire last year and look what happened to you during the 1995 election. People are smarter than that.

Mr Christopherson: Let's have a fight under the same rules. Come on, big shot bully. Come on, bully.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, member for Hamilton Centre.

Mr Christopherson: You are a coward. You won't fight under the same rules.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Hamilton Centre, come to order. I'm not warning you again.

Mr Gilchrist: Isn't this intriguing? The member opposite filled the airwaves with righteous indignation for a quarter of an hour and now he's saying we somehow are undermining the system because he thinks we should fight the next election under the same rules — "the same rules." I want to take him quite literally, because throughout this debate we've heard that one of the things the bill will attempt to address is the fact that there was a wide variance in spending limits in ridings all across the province of Ontario. The bill continues to recognize that the geographically vast ridings in the north will get extra spending allowance, because obviously they face different demands. Before he slinks out, I want to point out to the member for Hamilton Centre that the same rules he's suggesting —

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Scarborough East, I think that was personal and unparliamentary and I believe you should retract that.

Mr Gilchrist: I will withdraw, although we hear far worse every day in here, Madam Speaker.

Before he leaves — he's still intent on leaving because he doesn't want to hear the answer after he heckles from the other side. If we fight the next election on the same rules, the member for Hamilton Centre wants \$1.34, which is the current spending limit, not the 96 cents that this bill would bring forward. Now we understand why he's so indignant. It makes a complete mockery of his comments about this bill accomplishing the buying of an election. The spending limit per voter that the member fought the 1995 election under was \$1.34; this bill will save 96 cents.

1750

Let's go further. We heard comments from the member for Fort York, \$1.07; comments from the member for Dovercourt, \$1.08; the two members opposite who I debate every week, the member for Beaches-Woodbine, \$1.13; the member for York South, \$1.16. In every case the people who are suggesting that this bill is going to increase the ability to buy votes will in fact see a tightening up, will see a reduction in the amount of money any one of them can spend in terms of influencing the voters.

There are so many other myths. I guess they believe, as they whistle their way through the graveyard, that if they just keep saying something over and over again, by osmosis people will pick up these things to be truisms.

Let's deal with the facts, and I know that frustrates, but the facts. In the last audited report of the Commission on Election Finances, let's talk about the average gift from individuals to the three parties. The Ontario Liberal Party got an average of \$169; the NDP, \$81; and we got \$121. The Liberals got more. From the corporations — this one is very telling — Liberals, \$930; NDP, \$910; average corporate gift to the PC Party, \$522 — \$400 less than the Liberals, \$400 less than you got. But there's a third category, one that particularly the NDP would not ever like to have mentioned in this chamber: trade unions. In this one you don't take a back seat to anyone. The Liberals' average gift from trade unions, \$409; the average gift to the NDP, \$763. You're asking yourself, Madam Speaker, I'm sure, "What did the Tories get?" You're smiling because you know the answer: Nothing. Zero.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr Gilchrist: I obviously struck a nerve.

The fact of the matter is, they would love to focus your attention on corporations. They would love to talk about rich friends. The fact is, either as individuals or as corporations, the richest friends are the friends of the Liberal Party. But that other category, the one they never talk about, is the unions, the people from whom they get large donations.

We never hear it talked about in here, the influence the unions have. When the teachers' unions speculate about buying the next election by putting out so much third-party advertising, they'd be spending more money than the number one advertiser in Canada: McDonald's. That's okay. They have no problem with that, knowing full well,

change, but more to the point, there is no demonstrable case that polling has in any way influenced past elections. There is so much more to say. Let me, as a couple of final comments here, say that it is very important for us to look at the actual costs of running elections. I don't think there is anyone who has made it into this chamber who wouldn't accept there are certain quantifiable costs. Everyone will undertake a certain amount of organization in their office. They will buy lawn signs. They will place some advertisements. They will have some costs, particularly in the rural areas, of actually getting out and around to see voters, to go to all-candidates' meetings.

But the fact that they are quantifiable allows us a very high comfort level that what we've learned in past elections, now looking at what the federal government has allowed, remembering that we have copied the shape and size of those federal ridings, it's quite appropriate for us to take all the historical knowledge, apply it to the federal spending limits and copy that.

The bottom line is that his bill will not subvert democracy. This bill will provide fairness. This bill provides a moderation of the vast escalation in expenses that was allowed before this bill. My final point is that the bill is unnecessary. We bring this forward. The other two parties were offered an opportunity. They chose not to offer amendments. We have to proceed.

Mr Bradley: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: My point of order is to seek unanimous consent of the House to allow the member for Scarborough East to speak for another hour, please.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I hear a no.

Ms Bassett has moved government notice of motion 23. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye." Those opposed, please say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell. *The division bells rang from 1759 to 1804.*

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

Ayes

Ouellette, Jerry J.
Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Roses, Lillian
Runciman, Robert W.
Saunderson, William
Shea, Dermyn
Sheehan, Frank
Skarica, Toni
Smith, Bruce
Spina, Joseph
Tsubouchi, David H.
Tumbull, David
VanKoughnet, Bill
Wettauer, Wayne
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Young, Terence H.

Amott, Ted
Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Bassett, Isabel
Beaubien, Marcel
Boushy, Dave
Brown, Jim
Carr, Gary
Carroll, Jack
Cunningham, Dianne
Dandorf, Harry
Doyle, Ed
Elliot, Brenda
Flaherty, Jim
Fox, Gary
Froese, Tom
Gilchrist, Steve
Grimmett, Bill
Hudak, Tim
Hodgson, Chrs
Johnson, Bert
Johns, Helen
Johnson, David
Kells, Morley
Kees, Frank
Leach, Al
Leadston, Gary L.
Martinuk, Gerry
Munro, Julia
Mushinski, Manlynn
Newman, Dan
O'Toole, John

at least taking the teachers' unions at their word, that the advertising is not going to be pro-government. They're happy that that subversion of the political process might very well take place. But don't ever put in rules that would provide fairness across all the ridings in Ontario. Don't ever talk about matching the federal spending even though it's on record.

Let me just quote from the letter of the representative of the Liberal Party that was part of the all-party discussion that took place a number of weeks back about the proposals on how to deal with this bill. I'm quoting from Mr Dwight Duncan, who is the MPP for Windsor-Walkerville: "The government argued quite strongly during the debate on Bill 81 that if the federal ridings were good enough for the federal government, then they were good enough for the provincial government. Liberals ask," — note that he didn't say that Dwight Duncan asks, "he jumped all Liberals in — "if the federal expense limits were high enough for the recent federal election campaign, why are they not high enough for Mike Harris?"

Mr Bradley: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I just want to know if I missed — I could be wrong. Did the member say that polling, research and travel are now exempted from any spending limits at all? I didn't hear.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for St Catharines, that's not a point of order.

Mr Gilchrist: Not that you had a great expectation it would be, I'm sure, Madam Speaker, because they never

We indulged you a break in the middle of a coughing fit. I can assure you I have no similar medical emergency afflicting me right now, save and except the frustration and the mental anguish we have having to listen to the comments opposite some days.

The bottom line is, let's talk about some of those things, but they're already exempt. Again, one of the canards that are being floated around in the debate here is that somehow this is new. You know full well it is not new. Polling is exempt. More to the point, your comments earlier today and comments earlier during these debates, have been that somehow that too is an unfair influence in the political process, that somehow that will skew the results of the election, that the voters out there will be swayed when they see those polling numbers, to the extent that it makes a mockery of the election process.

I have to remind the member for St Catharines again that if you were correct, the fact of the matter is you'd be sitting on this side of the House because during the last election you spent five times as much on polling as the Conservatives did. So why didn't the Liberal Party win the election if, to take your words, polling skews the results and polling influences voters? Obviously, it's currently exempt, and if it continues to be exempt there is no

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the motion

will please rise.

Nays

Barolucci, Rick
Bradley, James J.
Caplan, David
Christopherson, David
Cleary, John C.
Conway, Sean G.
Crozier, Bruce
Gravelle, Michael
Hoy, Pat
Kormos, Peter
Kwinter, Monte
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Lessard, Wayne
Marchese, Rosario
McLeod, Lyn
Patten, Richard
Poulin, Gilles
Ramsay, David
Ruprecht, Tony
Sergio, Mario
Silipo, Tony

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The

ayes are 52; the nays are 26.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:30 of the clock this evening.

The House adjourned at 1807.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

Duncan, Dwight
Grandmaitre, Bernard
McGuinty, Dalton
Martel, Shelley
Wood, Len

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

[illegible]

Monday 22 June 1998

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS		OTHER BUSINESS		TABLE DES MATIÈRES		PETITIONS		MOTIONS		ORAL QUESTIONS		Environmental protection	
Special services at home program	Mr Mohn	1679	Highway safety	Mr Michalash	1693	Health care funding	Mr Conway	1683	Protection for health care workers	Mr Hardeman	1691	Appointment of Information and Privacy Commissioner	Mr Sterling
Riverdale Hospital	Ms Churley	1679	Gas wells	Mr Barrett	1694	Health care	Mr Bradley	1686	Hospital restructuring	Mr Gertelsen	1691	Privacy Commissioner	Mr Sterling
Air quality	Mr Hastings	1679	Visitors	The Speaker	1682	Health care	Mr Sergio	1691	Abortion	Mr Gertelsen	1691	Appointment of Information and Privacy Commissioner	Mr Sterling
Government advertising	Mr Gertelsen	1680	OTHER BUSINESS			Health care	Mr Sergio	1691	Abortion	Mr Gertelsen	1691	Privacy Commissioner	Mr Sterling
Government spending	Mr Silipo	1680	GOVERNMENT MOTIONS			Health care	Mr Sergio	1691	Abortion	Mr Gertelsen	1691	Privacy Commissioner	Mr Sterling
Events in Scarborough Centre	Mr Newman	1680	Time allocation, government notice of motion number 23, Mr Sterling	Ms Bassett	1694	Health care	Mr Sergio	1691	Abortion	Mr Gertelsen	1691	Privacy Commissioner	Mr Sterling
Electoral reform	Mr Duncan	1680	Mr Gertelsen	Mr Grimmett	1694	Health care	Mr Sergio	1691	Abortion	Mr Gertelsen	1691	Privacy Commissioner	Mr Sterling
Municipal restructuring	Mr Christopherson	1681	Mr Silipo	Mr Bradley	1699	Health care	Mr Sergio	1691	Abortion	Mr Gertelsen	1691	Privacy Commissioner	Mr Sterling
Emancipation Day	Mr Jim Brown	1681	Mr Marchese	Mr Bradley	1699	Health care	Mr Sergio	1691	Abortion	Mr Gertelsen	1691	Privacy Commissioner	Mr Sterling
Buses Act, 1998, Bill P-8, Mr Boushy	Agreed to	1681	Mr Christopherson	Mr Bradley	1699	Health care	Mr Sergio	1691	Abortion	Mr Gertelsen	1691	Privacy Commissioner	Mr Sterling
Emancipation Day Act, 1998, Bill 46, Mr Jim Brown	Agreed to	1681	Mr Gilchrist	Mr Bradley	1699	Health care	Mr Sergio	1691	Abortion	Mr Gertelsen	1691	Privacy Commissioner	Mr Sterling
Protection of Children on School	Agreed to	1681	Mr Marchese	Mr Bradley	1699	Health care	Mr Sergio	1691	Abortion	Mr Gertelsen	1691	Privacy Commissioner	Mr Sterling
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Second Session, 36th Parliament

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de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 36^e législature

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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 22 June 1998

Lundi 22 juin 1998



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 22 juin 1998

Monday 22 June 1998

The House met at 1830.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENERGY COMPETITION ACT, 1998
LOI DE 1998 SUR LA CONCURRENCE
DANS LE SECTEUR DE L'ÉNERGIE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 35, An Act to create jobs and protect consumers by promoting low-cost energy through competition, to protect the environment, to provide for pensions and to make related amendments to certain Acts / Projet de loi 35, Loi visant à créer des emplois et à protéger les consommateurs en favorisant le bas prix de l'énergie au moyen de la concurrence, protégéant l'environnement, traitant de pensions et apportant des modifications connexes à certaines lois.

Mr Tony Rupprecht (Parkdale): I'm delighted to be able to participate in this discussion on Bill 35 to break up Ontario Hydro. As all of us know, there is a statue of Sir Adam Beck at the bottom of University Avenue, at Queen and University. Sir Adam Beck was one of the most well-known civil servants. He was knighted to a great degree for the service he provided to Ontario and especially for his contribution to Ontario Hydro. He is looking north. He is looking to the Legislature, and if his eyes and his head were not of bronze, he would surely today give us some recommendations. He might even shake his head and roll his eyes.

This bill is about the breakup of Ontario Hydro. The fact is that the breakup of this almost 100-year-old monopoly of hydro-electric power in Ontario is being done very quickly. The question arises of how this is going to be accomplished. The Premier said to us today that he doesn't believe, when he looks at gasoline prices across Ontario, that gasoline prices are in fact at the point where all the oil suppliers get together, and for some reason on weekends the price of gasoline goes up. What will it be for Hydro? Will it be that the Premier will say, "I'm not quite sure what is going to happen here, but let me assure you hydro officials are paying and that we're going to be paying in the city of Toronto are going to go down"? I know, for instance —

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Sorry to interrupt the member, but I don't believe there's a quorum in here. Would you check for that, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Would you please check if we have a quorum.

Acting Clerk at the Table (Ms Tonia Granum): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Acting Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Parkdale.

Mr Rupprecht: I want to draw attention to an article in the Globe and Mail on June 19 by Terence Corcoran. He says that the Premier thinks that since the gasoline market is uncompetitive and regulation is the answer, he believes that the gouging oil corporations have something to do with the prices at the pump and that gas prices "should be equalized across the province." Then he goes on to say that the Premier has a bird's eye view of the situation and doesn't believe that can be accomplished. What is his view going to be about deregulation? What is his view going to be about electric prices at Ontario Hydro?

This is turning a giant experiment in central planning and regulatory control into a bit of a circus. I'm afraid, and I'm not sure the position on the government benches is going to be very clear on what is going to take place with deregulation, on what is going to take place in terms of sneaking it back into the private sector in terms of privatization.

What will happen? I'm not sure, after we look at the 160 pages of Bill 35, that the answers are in here. It's a long document. It's short on answers and I think we're going to have a long way to go before we get them.

Let me just tell you that two days ago I rang a doorbell in one of my constituencies and on the door it said "Medallion Homes." Do you remember what that meant? "Medallion Homes" meant that everything is done electrically. The doorbell is electric, of course the heating is electric, the water heater's electric, everything in that Medallion Home is electric. That was happening when electric rates were cheap, and today when we're looking at hydro prices today are the third highest in Canada, it does not speak very well in terms of ability to attract industries to Ontario, creating jobs for Ontario, when the prices are this high.

I remind you that we look at these homes that were established a few years ago, all done electrically, and they are being switched over to gas. I have said this before: The millions of dollars that taxpayers are spending on changing electric water heaters to gas water heaters is something we wouldn't have to do if hydro rates were

do, and even if other corporations buy it, will that necessarily mean that the consumer is being protected? After 160 pages we know one sure fact, and that is, right now the debt of Hydro is \$32 billion. Let me repeat it: \$32 billion, and that does not include Darlington and that does not include the atomic section of Hydro, atomic power. At \$32 billion of debt, it would mean that for every one of you and every one of us, for every Ontarian, it's \$2,900 of debt.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mrs Helen Johns (Huron): I have a few comments to say to the member for Parkdale as a result of that rendition of the bill that I hadn't heard as I read it.

The first criticism he made today talked about how quickly we have moved. I think everyone in the House knows that we laid out in the Common Sense Revolution, that the Premier laid out in the Common Sense Revolution, that he was going to look at Ontario Hydro and at a better way of doing things because the system needed to be changed. Since that time, ministers and people involved in this have gone through stakeholder consultations, we've been involved with consumers, we've looked at different opportunities. "Quickly" is not something you could call this. In fact people have been asking us to move ahead with this because the pressure in the community to do something about electricity prices is phenomenal.

Also, the member talked about the price of electricity and how it's just got to go up. He says there is nothing that shows us prices have gone down. I have to say that the evidence just doesn't bear true. When you look at deregulation and at gas prices and the way they have gone in the last five to 10 years, you can see gas prices have declined, so you see it when you deregulate.

You can also see it in examples like Australia, where they have gone through this deregulation phase and have experienced real cost savings of between 20% and 40%. We also have it in England. When they did this, prices fell by 15%. So it's very important that we recognize that there's a potential for savings as we look for management efficiencies, as we look for better ways of doing things, as we look to take out the little percentages that everybody is making along the line as it moves out to the consumer.

This is a really good bill. I'm happy the Liberals are supporting it and I look forward to the member for Parkdale having time to read it.

Mr Frank Michash (Kenora): It's always a pleasure to comment on the comments made by the member for Parkdale. As we know, he has been around this place for a good number of years and knows of what he speaks.

In terms of Bill 35, he brought forth a good number of issues that I'm hearing. As you would know, in the north we're always concerned about higher rates, whether it be gasoline prices, consumer gas prices, whatever. Of course, the member for Parkdale indicates that we will certainly be looking at higher rates here, and there's nothing to show that we will not be looking at great increases for our hydro-electric power. As you will know, the climatic conditions in the north actually make for more of a cost

reasonable. In fact today we know they're very high and the question remains, what will happen after privatization? What will happen after it's split up or deregulated? The answers are not here, we suspect, as does the chair of Ontario Hydro when he says: "I'm not sure about electric prices in Ontario. I'm not sure, and the reason I'm not sure is because any time it has been accomplished in the United States that a hydro corporation was split up, any time that took place, prices did not go down, they went up."

When you look at historical precedents and you know that hydro rates have not gone down under similar circumstances, what would make us believe today that these rates would go down? Mr Farlinger, who is the chair of Hydro, says, "My friends, we have to take a leap of faith in something based on the reality, but a leap of faith is not it says: It's faith. In short, there might be a decrease in hydro rates, but just as well there may not be. That's why we're asking the minister today when he said not too long ago, and I quote him, "We know this will be a recipe for lower prices in every jurisdiction," followed quickly by a quote from the chair of Hydro and he says: "I don't know. It's a leap of faith."

We're asking the minister today, what makes him think that splitting up Hydro in Ontario today is indeed going to lower prices? That question he cannot answer. That question no one in the government can answer. After looking at 160 pages, the basic question of how to protect the consumer is not being answered, the very basic question, not just in Toronto but out on the farms where you've got transmission lines and the cost might even be higher. Will they be protected on the farms?

1840

Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte): It says so in the

Mr Ruprecht: Will we be protected right here in Toronto where it should be a bit cheaper if you split up Hydro?

I heard just now: "Yes, it will be done. In fact, there will be some kind of guarantee." But there cannot be a guarantee. My friends, remember this, your own Premier is on the side of the angels when he says, "I believe there are gouging oil companies which gouge the consumer and there should be one standard rate across Ontario." He's on the right side, but man, oh, man, he's got to send out four MPPs with cameras taking photos of those gouging oil companies and those gas stations that are trying to charge us more on the weekends. Four of them are going out and taking photos. Sure enough, have you been out last weekend? Have the prices gone up? They haven't gone up. Yes, he is somewhat right when he says there may be some gouging oil companies.

But my friends, if he says that, then what about Hydro rates? We know what's going to happen. I'm sure most of us will agree that there will be an indirect switch, that it'll be done by the back door. You will have privatization. Are the oil companies going to then buy part of Hydro? Are they going to be outlawed from buying? Even if they

impact on our households and families, whether it be hydro-electricity, gasoline or whatever.

The member also goes on to talk a little bit about the debt that Ontario Hydro presently has. I think he puts it well in terms of indicating to the taxpayer of Ontario that we are all part of this debt and we are all responsible for the debt that has been incurred.

The member has also indicated that Bill 35, as with many other pieces of legislation brought forth by this government, has not been well thought out. We always find things that are definitely wrong because of the lack of time put into such things as Bill 35. All one has to do is go back to the fiasco of Suncor and remember what great problems it created for the government, another prime example. We could go on and on and talk about pieces of legislation — Lands for Life is another prime example which parallels Bill 35 — that are not well thought out. Again, I would just like to commend the member for Parkdale on what he has said here in the Legislature.

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): The member for Parkdale makes an excellent point when he talks about the promise of lower prices for electricity. That's part of what the government is trying to sell with the introduction of Bill 35 to deregulate the hydro industry, but there's really no guarantee in this bill that there are going to be lower prices.

I know the member for Huron likes to say over and over again that the experience in other jurisdictions is that prices are going to go down — "Just look at the gas marketing business; the prices went down" — but the fact is that there are no real assurances in this bill that will guarantee to consumers that rates are going to go down.

We would like to see an assurance like that in the bill, and we'll be moving an amendment to ensure there is that protection for consumers, because we think that is very important. That's the promise being held out by the government, that rates are going to go down. All of us would like to see lower utilities bills. I certainly would. I know that when I mentioned last week that I was a consumer of electrical power there were some members in the government who were surprised by that. But most of us are electrical consumers, and it seems to be increasing all the time with a lot of those time-saving devices. We really need some assurance that rates are going to go down, other than just the bald statements of members of the government.

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): It's not often we get a chance to comment on some comments made by the member for Parkdale, but I appreciate the opportunity.

We are making progress in this House. Normally, the Liberals are opposed to everything. They were opposed to more jobs in the province; they were opposed to lower taxes in the province; they were opposed to less government in the province. We've made some headway here, because now we have a Liberal member standing up and saying he's not sure where he is on this particular issue. He's one of the few people who aren't sure, because the unions are in favour of this, the large consumers are in favour of this.

The member for Parkdale is not sure yet whether he is in favour of this, but that does represent progress, because normally we're used to the Liberals being opposed to absolutely everything we introduce in here.

1850

He talked about there being no guarantee of prices staying down. Of course, over the last three years, I guess, we've forced the prices to stay down because the Premier allowed Hydro to continue to operate in that particular way, of course prices would have had to escalate. That brings with it higher costs for people who want to come to our province, because it's an attractive place, and create new jobs. If we don't get our arms around the cost of energy, they will find some other jurisdiction to go to.

So Bill 35, introducing competition to the generation and sale of hydro in our particular province, is great news for the people of our province. It's great news for the employers, for the employees and for the investors. I'm sure, as the parliamentary assistant said, should the member for Parkdale get a chance to read the bill, he too would endorse it as a great-news bill.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Parkdale, you have two minutes.

Mr Ruprecht: Thank you very much, members for Chatham-Kent, Windsor-Riverside and Huron, for your comments. Let me quickly remind you that there are a number of questions that have to be answered and they're not answered. There is a multitude. Let me just give you three or four.

Who will be stuck for paying Hydro's \$32-billion debt? Will it be retail farm electricity consumers or the average taxpayer? Who's going to be stuck for it? Will it be you? Who will pay for Hydro's \$8-billion plan to bring its nuclear plants up to gear? Who will pay for that? What's the answer? You don't know. Will industry regulators be able to be tough watchdogs with the power to make sure that Harris's plan does not result in a windfall profit for companies and higher costs for consumers? Who's going to be sure about that? Suddenly you're not so sure.

Let me just tell you one thing, quickly, about the member for Huron when she says, "We're moving quickly." Yes, you moved just as quickly two years ago when you bought \$200 million worth of Suncor to get a window into the oil company. What happened? How much was lost? Over \$200 million was lost because of your quick action. That's what happened.

Finally, let me quickly talk about the environment. Do you trust Hydro about the environmental problems that we're going to be creating? I'm reminded of Highway 404. What are they planning to do right now? They're planning to take the highway right by a river system, right next to the Black River, near Sutton, Ontario, and that's the government for you. So, do we trust this government to think about the future? Do we trust this government to

private sector to take hold of an issue such as hydro that everybody needs. He knew that it's something that should belong, quite appropriately, in public hands. He did his utmost to make sure that the type of people over there wouldn't break it up in his time. They're finally doing it.

I contrast Sir Adam Beck with Sir Graham Day. It's interesting, both sirs, knighted by the Queen: one good sir who realizes the importance of public ownership, and the other good sir who wants to privatize anything that moves, in this case Hydro.

Mr Gilles Poulriot (Lake Nipigon): He's a serial privatizer.

Mr Marchese: I wouldn't say that. Others have commented about that. But it's so fascinating that you have two sirs on the opposite extremes: 1910, public; 1998-99, private. It's fascinating.

Member for Lake Nipigon — Speaker, through you, always — why do you think that Sir Graham Day would have been invited to join Ontario Hydro as a board member?

Mrs Johns: Expertise.

Mr Marchese: Expertise in privatization, member for Huron. That's the trade he engages in. We're talking big bucks here. Come on. He wasn't invited because he's a nice guy. He is, in fact. I was there in the committee when we interviewed him. I was chairing the committee that day. He's a nice man, but the guy is here to teach you some lessons. He's going to prepare you five years hence, once this bill is passed, on how to privatize this whole affair. Why else?

You could hire his expertise as a consultant. Why put him on the board? Pay him a few bucks, get his good knowledge, or even write him a letter and say, "Sir Graham So-and-so, give us some of your good thoughts on this matter." No, that wouldn't be okay. You've got to get him on the board. Why do you want him at the board, member for Lake Nipigon? Through you, Speaker. You want him there because this guy is going to give you the advice you need to privatize.

Member for Huron, I know you will shake your head each and every time I raise these points, but I'm not speaking to you; I'm speaking to the public. The debate is between us and you on the other side, and the audience watches us. The question is: Who do they believe? That is the real question: Who do they believe? We make arguments and the Tories make theirs. At the end of the day, I think the forces of good will triumph over the forces of evil and the people will see that.

Does Ontario Hydro need to be decimated or broken up? The Tories make the argument that it's broken, like so many other things they said Ontario is broken on and about, and they need to correct it. Every time they put in their hand to correct a problem, they've caused so much more misery that each and every time we've had to have other bills to rectify their previous problems.

It's a question of trust. The member for Huron obviously believes the public is on their side. All we can hope for is that the public will see through the agenda of this government.

The Acting Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I hear a "no." Further debate?

Mr Marchese: Not to worry, the member for Huron is going to get more than two minutes in the next couple of hours to respond. She'll be very happy. She'll have the time. I urge the Tory members on the other side to give the member for Huron all of the two minutes in order for her to respond to me, to the member for Parkdale and anybody else who is going to speak later. Please, the member for Huron would love for us to believe that after careful reading we will all realize that "the benefits of this bill are so transparent that anybody objecting or opposing is coming from a different planet." I'm assuming she would be saying.

We believe, and myself in particular, that this bill leaves the door open for privatization. I know, member for Huron, you don't want to even contemplate the thought and you haven't ruminated on the topic at all — neither you nor Premier Harris — because you haven't got the time to reflect on privatizing this particular issue. I understand it. But I genuinely believe that's what your agenda is all about. You see, I know that you could not be so foolhardy as to recommend at this time of the political game a privatization of Hydro, because you couldn't trust the public to believe you with that issue. So you will formulate it — I know, you're shaking your head again. Bear with me for a little while. You presented this bill in such a way as to make it appear that what you are doing is something that all the stakeholders are happy about and it's truly competitive, rates are going to go down, the environment — God bless — is going to be protected, the point, everything is okay. Just read the bill and go home. Like a few of the soccer teams that have just lost the games in the World Cup: Go home and you'll be happy. I tell you, when you go home after the World Cup, you're not a happy crowd. There's a loss here. There's a loss, and to raise these questions.

It's interesting, because the member for Parkdale, and others of course, has raised the issue of Sir Adam Beck, and, coincidentally, you've just invited Sir Graham Day to come and deal with issues of privatization.

Mrs Johns: Director of Ontario Hydro.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Huron, please.

Mr Marchese: The member for Huron wants to participate. I understand.

In 1910 or so we had Sir Adam Beck, who in my view was a visionary and understood that utilities of this sort, Hydro, needed to be public and you couldn't trust the

1900

I don't believe Ontario Hydro is broken. I believe

Torres caused the Darlington nuclear power station. Those fine Torres of the day said, "Darlington will only cost a couple of billion. Trust us," and from a \$2-billion problem, we now have a \$14-billion problem that they accumulated. Trust the Torres for that. So I suspect that perhaps what she's saying now is that maybe indeed it is broken in that regard, that they made some fundamental mistakes that they cannot of course renege on. They can't take credit for that, because why would you take credit for a \$14-billion problem?

We New Democrats of the day attacked that idea because we said, "This is a costly problem with a lot of costly problems down the line to take care of." I tell you, and I'll get into it if I have a moment, talk about decommissioning costs for nuclear power stations, or talk about disposing of the wastes from nuclear power stations. We haven't gotten into that. Member for Nipigon, we haven't even got into those costs yet, but the cost of disposing of waste from nuclear power stations is going to be egregious.

Mr Wayne Wetlaufer (Kitchenor): Oh, that's your word for the day.

Mr Marchese: It's a big word for a big problem. The cost for decommissioning is egregious as well. But you know something? They don't talk about that. I tell you, the public will have to bear the cost of that, through the consumer and/or — their favourite word — the taxpayer. I suspect their big clients are going to save a few bucks out of that one.

They talk about this stranded debt. "Don't worry, successor companies will take care of that problem." A few people, the other competitors, are not likely to be paying for that particular cost of it.

Interjection

Mr Marchese: Yes, the member for Huron will correct me when she gets there and tell me to read the bill. But this stranded debt is going to be, at the end of the day, very big. I suspect that number will be very high, and the public will pay the cost for that, I can tell you that.

We froze hydro rates when we were in government, but to hear this government, you'd imagine they're the only ones who froze them. We froze rates when we were in government and you continued with that. There's never any mention of the fact that New Democrats froze the rates.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Our freeze is older than your freeze.

Mr Marchese: We froze the rates, member for Huron. Speaker, we've got a problem here, I tell you. They are either on a different planet or not, but I've got to tell you, we froze hydro rates. Check it, member for Huron. Please do that. I'll wait for you. I've got nine more minutes. To hear them say it, they're the only ones who started that freeze. Even the member for Scarborough West or East —

Mr Gilchrist: It's been three years. No, wrong.

Mr Marchese: Centre.

That's what it is, and it's all premised on the whole point of lower aid, from the point that Ontario Hydro is broken, it needs to be decommissioned and that only through that kind of politics are we going to be able to see

There is no guarantee of lower prices, never will be. When we get to the issue of privatization, they say, "Oh, we're not doing that, at least not for five years," and once the five years is over, I can guarantee you, member for Huron, whether you're here or not — you might give me a call five years hence to say: "You were right. We talked about this with the minister. The minister never mentioned privatization, but, member for Fort York, you were absolutely right. The agenda is about privatization."

What we're talking about.

There's no guarantee of lower prices, never will be. When we get to the issue of privatization, they say, "Oh, we're not doing that, at least not for five years," and once the five years is over, I can guarantee you, member for Huron, whether you're here or not — you might give me a call five years hence to say: "You were right. We talked about this with the minister. The minister never mentioned privatization, but, member for Fort York, you were absolutely right. The agenda is about privatization."

Mr Marchese: That's okay. He's fine. He has got to defend his interests. The interests of Torres are to defend their private interests — the bigges, most profitable, most corporate successes we've got connected to Torres. It's handing down the profits to more of their friends, over and over again. With every bill presented in this House, that's what we're talking about.

Mr Wetlaufer: That's rubbish.

Mr Marchese: The member from Kitchenor is going to have his fair time in the House. I love to hear from him all the time.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Kitchenor.

Mr Wetlaufer: That's rubbish.

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The Acting Speaker: The member for Kitchenor.

Mr Marchese: He's from Scarborough anyway. Even he doesn't know that we froze the rates. The point is, if we've got a problem with Ontario Hydro, we should do what Sir Adam Beck said: Keep it in public control. They argue the rates will go down on the mere premise that once you set a competitive market, rates will automatically go down. We haven't had competition in this country, or any industrial country, since the 1910s or 1920s. Competition has been dead for years. You witness gas rates, gasoline rates, you witness bank rates or trust rates; they're all the same and they move within the same pattern, with slight differences from one to the rest — very slight. There is no competition in the market, and I've got to tell you, when we're dealing with this issue, rates cannot be guaranteed, ever, except on the promise of this government the rates will go down.

Speaker, I ask you: Do you believe them? That's what I ask the public: Do you believe them, on the sole basis of their promise, on the sole basis that that's what they say? There is no guarantee about that and never will be.

The member for Huron talks about the great success story in Britain. They socialized the debt and they privatized the profits, meaning a few of the big boys made a whole heap of money and the rest of the public sector, the taxpayers, picked up the debt. That's what this is all about in every issue imaginable. It's socializing the debt and privatizing profit. Some of their friends are going to get rich out of this. That's why the American consultants and companies are here, and that's why British consultants in the energy field are here, because they know they're going to make a buck.

a better break for the consumers, so it's a question of whether you trust these people.

At the level of the environment, we worry. We believe this bill could leave the environment at risk. While the bill says that the minister may impose emission caps on outside generators, there is no guarantee that he will do so. Do I believe the minister when he proposes in the legislation that he may impose emission caps on outside generators? I do not. If he really believes in getting tough with polluters, why didn't he write into the bill the requirement for regulations that do just that? In my view, it looks like the air is going to get dirtier, not cleaner. Witness the number of people who are commenting on the government's history on the environment and the savage attacks on this government, including the federal Liberal government, with respect to environmental violations. The air is getting dirtier all the time.

These people decided to have the environment deregulated or, put differently, companies are regulating themselves. We are entrusting companies with our physical health, for them to do the right thing. Do you believe a company is going to regulate itself if it means that they are going to lose millions of dollars to clean up their own mess? They're not going to do it. They put our lives at risk. This government puts our health at risk by saying that companies can regulate themselves. That's wrong. It isn't just wrong; it's morally wrong.

1910

Our health is getting worse all the time, and my humble view, not being a doctor or anything of that sort, is that many of the cancers that we are experiencing are directly related to the pollutants that are coming out of thousands of our industrial plants across Ontario. My view is that most of the cancers we are experiencing are due to that.

Mrs Johns: It's in the bill.

Mr Marchese: No. In the bill it says, "The minister may put emission caps." That's what the bill says. Member for Huron, you speak to the "may" part of it. If you want to deal with the "may" part, change it and put it in the bill. Put in the bill that it will require regulations to do just that and put caps on emissions in the bill. I don't trust you at all. "You" I mean generally, generically, for the government, because I believe some of you are sincere in your individual efforts to do the right thing. I have no doubt about that. But what I am witnessing generically here — generally speaking, I haven't seen good things coming out of this government as they relate to the environment. That's why the attacks against you are scathing. You can dismiss it, as most of you do, as your ministers do, but you can't get away from it.

If the Liberals were there, those guys would be different, wouldn't you, member for Timiskaming? Because Liberals are better. They've got a heart, like Mr Chretien at the federal level. They have a heart, not like the Tories: "We have a heart. We would be better." But they've got the same ugly record when it comes to the issues of environment. You guys and you guys are no different when it comes to these issues.

As we heard earlier, the consumer out there is really concerned about what will happen in terms of the Hydro

Mr Michals: Just a few comments on the comments made by the member for Fort York. We have already heard the rate hikes under his government brought back to his attention, in terms of the NDP government and the great number of rate hikes we had at that point.

Dealing with the facts I'm sure is a great frustration, but the fact of the matter is that the Hydro bill will lead to savings, dramatic savings.

I know it has been a while for the member, but let me take your mind back to the years immediately after your election. Let's start with 1990, where hydro rates went up 5.9%; in 1991, 8.6%; in 1992, the biggest one-year increase in hydro rates in the history of Ontario Hydro, almost a century of service, an 11.8% hydro rate increase; followed by a 7.9% increase in 1993. In fact, to give the member his due, having increased the cost of hydro rates by over one third in less than four years, they realized the error of their ways, and in 1994 they did freeze it for that last year. That also, you will recall, was the year they didn't bother having the House sit, and so there was no democratic input there, in very stark contrast to our five-year guaranteed freeze. Zero means zero, not a 33% increase.

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Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa-Rideau): Same speech. I have heard from the member for Fort York.

Mr Gilchrist: Indeed, for the second time today, we will be privatized. That's their agenda.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Scarborough East.

Mr Gilchrist: Member for Scarborough East.

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debt, the billions of dollars, in terms of we the ratepayers and we the residents of Ontario. People don't realize what \$1 billion means to the entire province, to the entire population, to them individually. It's scary stuff, and there's some real concern about who will eventually pay.

I spoke earlier about rates in Ontario. It seems that we in northern Ontario are a little more concerned about any rates, because if they go up in southern Ontario, as we've seen with gas prices, we'll watch them skyrocket in northern Ontario. We've had our lesson in terms of gas prices, and we're certainly concerned about hydro rates under this bill.

The member talked a little about the \$14 billion involved in terms of the Darlington nuclear power station. Again, some very large numbers, very hard numbers to realize, but who will pay?

The question of trust: Do we trust this government? As we've seen in other bills — the Lands for Life is a prime example — can we trust this government with anything, after we see the mess they've made with that legislation, and what they've done for northwestern Ontario? It's a matter of trust. Do we really trust Mike Harris and this cabinet, this government, who try to ram everything through at every possible turn?

I comment the member for Fort York for his comments.

Mr Pouliot: I too enjoyed the comments from my friend and most distinguished and eloquent colleague the member for Fort York, warning us, cautioning the members that the pitfalls are many, reminding the members of this House and the general public that Ontario Hydro has a debt of \$32 billion. Ontario Hydro is also right in your side pocket when it comes to the Canada pension plan; they have a debt approaching \$3 billion.

Ontario Hydro is about to embark on an expenditure anywhere from \$6 billion to \$11 billion or \$12 billion because the nuclear plants are not functioning very well. They need to be fixed. When all is said and done, you're looking at upwards of \$40 billion.

Does the bill say that when you privatize or when you invite competition, hence lessening the ability of Ontario Hydro to pay its debt — who will pick up the bill? Would you buy a company with a \$40-billion debt? What the government will do is pass that responsibility on to the taxpayers and tell us that in the future maintenance will be the same, and large projects will be capitalized by Tom, Dick and Harry Tory? It's not going to happen, because those people don't have the power of the purse to fund a project like Darlington up front, \$14 billion. No one in the private sector will do this. It's not lucrative. They want a return on investment. The Tories are supposed to understand that. It's a sad state of affairs. We'll have an opportunity to go into some more detail.

Mrs Johns: I'm losing a little faith. A couple of days ago the NDP said they were going to listen carefully to the debate and make a decision after debate, and I'm afraid right now that they're not moving towards seeing what a good bill this really is.

There are many pitfalls, no question, to changing Ontario Hydro, but maintaining the status quo and keeping year, with all the problems it has, is craziness.

The main issue I got from the member for Fort York today was how upset he was with the people we were appointing to the board. I would just like to say, in the minute I have left, that he commented about us using board members who had expertise. I agree that previous governments did not look for expertise when they chose a Hydro board. I agree with that. When the NDP were in power, they appointed Michael Cassidy, who was a former provincial NDP leader and a federal MP, to the board. What expertise does he have in electricity, I ask you? Kaeley Cummings they appointed to the board, the former national secretary of CUPÉ and an executive of the Ottawa Centre NDP. Elmer McVey is a prominent Canadian Labour Congress member and NDP member.

We're out there looking for expertise. We have brought to the board some people who have expertise that is unquestionable: We have brought Sir Graham Day to the board, we have brought someone from Laidlaw. When I sat in the select committee, I listened to Maurice Strong, who was appointed by the opposition.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Lake Nipigon, you're disturbing the peace.

Mrs Johns: He made some costly —

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Lake Nipigon, en français, modérez vos transports.

Member for Fort York, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr Marchese: I want to remind the Tory members that Darlington began with the Tories and continued with my good buddies to the right here, the Liberals. It's a \$14-billion problem. They started it by saying, "It's only a couple of billion; trust us," and continued it, and it later came to \$14 billion. And when you get to the issue of disposing of the waste, the cost connected to disposing of the waste of that nuclear station, the cost to take it to space is going to be astronomical. The cost to dispose of it in the centre of the earth — astronomical. It's going to be with us forever. This is the serious cost we have to worry about.

In relation to rates, we started freezing the rates in 1994. Maybe the member for Huron didn't have enough time to check that, but we started doing that. The NDP did that, followed by the Tories, who kept the rates down. We have a legacy, a history, of a Darlington problem, just to name one. We're still dealing with this legacy. But they would rather we forget that, because those are old days. Yes, they happened, costs are there, but there's nothing we could do. Now we've got to fix the problem so we have to decommission Hydro; we've got to privatize it. They're bringing expertise, all right. Sir Graham Day has privatization expertise. That's why he's there. These people, whenever they appoint them, there's a reason. This is not just because he's a fine Conservative fellow but

because he's an expert in privatization. That's why he's

there.

I urge the public, on this particular issue, to give care-

ful review of this bill, because rates will not go down, the

environment will not be protected, the stranded debt is

going to be huge and we are going to pay.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): I'm especi-

ally honoured this evening to have the opportunity to say a

few words relative to Bill 35, the Energy Competition Act.

I'm not really planning so much to talk about the legis-

lation itself. This is enabling legislation.

I am a little concerned, though, about all the negative

discussions that have been taking place to date. I have yet

to hear either of the opposition parties assess the situation

presently with Ontario Hydro, assess the nerve and the

courage that the chairman of Hydro and the Minister of

Energy have to initiate change. I don't understand why

you're so afraid of change, because it's been going on all

our lives and it's going to continue to go on.

This evening I would like to spend the time I have talk-

ing about some of the history of Hydro as it was in earlier

days. In the beginning, the responsibility for Ontario's

electricity industry rested with the private sector. That

probably shocks my colleague across the way, because he

doesn't feel that that has ever been good or can take place

in a positive manner. Going back to the 1880s, steam-

driven generators were powering mills and lighting a few

main Ontario streets. By 1890, most towns of 3,000

people or more had electricity provided by privately

owned thermal-electric plants. Five years later, the

Niagara River was harnessed for electric power at

Niagara Falls, New York. That's the generating plant on

the American side. This was the first major hydro-electric

station and it started a new pattern for electric power in

North America.

Many power leases were held by private utilities

serving local areas, but hydro-electric power was limited

to those who could afford it and service was unreliable.

Public sentiment was growing for reliable, low-cost

power, and for choice over who provided it. That, through

this new legislation, is going to do exactly that: It's going

to give the customer a choice of the source of supply.

In 1900, the Toronto Board of Trade stated that the

Niagara River was the most economical source of power

for Toronto, but there was the question of who should own

and operate the transmission lines from Niagara. In 1902,

25 small businessmen and municipal representatives met

at the Walper House in Kitchener where they discussed

how to bring cheap, long-distance electric power from

Niagara Falls to about a dozen municipalities in southern

Ontario. The crusade was on to make public power serve

the common man.

Around that time the Mackenzie syndicate, a private

Toronto group, obtained a power franchise in 1903. Their

goal was to control Toronto's electricity, as they con-

trolled the Toronto Electric Power Co and the Toronto

Street Railway, the biggest users of electricity in the

province. The syndicate obtained an irrevocable franchise

to generate electricity from Niagara Falls, for a yearly

rental of \$25,000.

Adam Beck, mayor of London and Conservative

member of the Legislature, became an advocate of public

power. A bill creating the Hydro-Electric Power Com-

mission of Ontario received royal assent on May 14,

1906. Its mandate was to deliver power to its customers at

cost. Just over 92 years ago, on June 7, Adam Beck was

appointed as its first chairman. The commission was

designed to provide Ontario's electric power needs in the

most cost-effective way possible and to accomplish

important public policy objectives such as industrial

development and rural electrification.

Those are the objectives today. If we don't keep those

things in mind, Ontario will not hold its place as an

industrial province.

In the same year, the government introduced An Act to

Provide for the Transmission of Electrical Power to Mun-

icipalities, legislation that enabled municipalities to buy

power from the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of

Ontario.

1930

It took Beck four years to get his first power line and

eight years to acquire his first generator. In October 1910,

Beck staged his first ceremonial switch-on of electricity in

Kitchener, where it all began. As he flipped on the switch,

the stadium was flooded with light, and lightbulbs in the

street spelled out "Power for the People." Ontario had

another chapter to add to its history books.

Electricity was new and a scientific wonder to people.

You couldn't see it, smell it or touch it, but at the flip of a

switch it was suddenly there to run machines, streetlights,

move railway cars and do a thousand other useful jobs. A

lot of people still today, when they flip the light switch,

don't realize that they are connecting the circuit back to a

generator and transmission line at some location.

I can recall back in 1947 or 1948, I think it was, the

Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, which was

Ontario Hydro at the time, had promised the village of

Elgin in South Crosby township power for Christmas.

Between the weather and the road conditions and so on,

time was sneaking away and Christmas was coming at us,

so there was a lot of overtime and so on put in. The people

who lived in the village had enough faith in the system

that they had already gone out and bought appliances,

stoves and fridges, and even Christmas tree lights. By the

time we were ready to try it on Christmas Eve, the engin-

eers had designed the circuits for general load and already,

without much notice, we were picking up peak loads. You

can imagine the embarrassment it was, but it was solved

and at about 10 o'clock that night, on Christmas Eve, the

village was lighted and the children were extremely happy

to have actual Christmas lights on their trees.

At first, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission was the

distributing agency for power purchased on behalf of the

municipalities. Construction of a transmission system to

from Niagara to Toronto and a dozen other municipalities

in southern Ontario which had signed contracts with

job I had at St Catharines, at ND-21 and NF-23, we had the three cycles there to deal with. We had the 60 cycle, the 25 cycle, and we had a 66-2/3 cycle over at the steel plant in Hamilton, with one isolated feeder to feed that plant.

I could go on here but I know my colleague wants to share some time with me. I just want to say that the parties who are dwelling on something negative towards change, I wish they wouldn't do that. If they have an alternative to change, I'm very interested in hearing it, but I don't like to be put in a position to fear change. We must also recognize that the vision of the past has been fully realized and it's now time to take Ontario Hydro into a new century. It's time once again to blaze a new trail of success.

The Acting Speaker: Is there unanimous agreement that the member for Durham East share his time with the member? There was no request for it. Agreed? Agreed.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): I'm very pleased to make my small contribution to Bill 35, An Act to create jobs and protect consumers by promoting low-cost energy through competition, to protect the environment, to provide for pensions and to make related amendments to certain Acts — a very comprehensive piece of legislation. You've got to recognize first that in my riding of Durham East — and I'm speaking perhaps for some of the members in Durham. There are two nuclear plants in Durham region. There's the plant in my riding, the Darlington plant, and in Minister Eckers' riding there's the Pickering nuclear plant. All of the residents in Durham region are very much concerned that we proceed with safety first. That's the most important thing.

How long has this discussion been going on? I have to look back. Recently I was a member of the select committee looking at Ontario Hydro Nuclear. That was an all-party committee that worked very hard, with the very respectable Mr Kwinter and Mr Conway from the opposition party and Mr Laughtren from the third party. I would say it was a very amicable committee.

There were a series of recommendations from their report that I could share with the members here tonight. Those recommendations pretty reasonably expected that the government would move forward with a competitive model. I've prepared some notes on this and in the limited time I'll try to put them on the record.

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I've looked at several questions that I raised in the research. Restructuring in other jurisdictions is one issue. For example, England, Wales, Australia, Argentina and California have led the way. In fact this is not a new experience and other provinces such as Alberta and other areas in the United States are looking forward to forming new partnerships as well.

I must digress here for a moment and recognize that the licensing and regulating portion is not within provincial jurisdiction. The previous speakers I heard today mentioned Sir Adam Beck. That was the foundation of Ontario Hydro as a corporation. What we're talking about is not the federal regulatory jurisdiction area; we're talking about providing a framework for competition. In fact, the

East. In particular, I'd like to comment on the very fine presentation by the member for Lanark-Renfrew, who really gave us a very full history of Ontario Hydro, a history that, until the last few years, we as Ontarians can all be proud of. Ontario Hydro was certainly a leader in the generation of hydro-electric power, for sure, in the world. Many other jurisdictions followed suit, especially power that we've been blessed with via Niagara Falls — not only a tremendous wonder of the world, but a tremendous source of power.

I think it is a compliment to Ontarians in the past too that we were the very first jurisdiction to understand that access to a utility such as electricity should be in the public domain and not in the private domain. That is something that Ontario, as the member pointed out, really realized back in 1906. It was a sharp contrast, and one of the many contrasts of why we are different from our neighbours to the south of us, in the United States of America. On some of these basic issues, very quickly after the discovery of these utilities we understood that it was in the people's best interests to have these remain in the public domain.

Times have changed and so has Hydro. I'm going to be the next speaker and I might save some of my remarks continuing on with the history of Hydro and why this change, which I don't think anybody in this House is afraid of, is necessary today. I'll get back to that when I stand up next.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the remarks of the members for Lanark-Renfrew and Durham East. To the member for Lanark-Renfrew, very little criticism. Most of his speech was focused on the history of Hydro. The only thing he did accuse us of was that we were afraid of change. I just want to go on the record as saying to him that, quite the contrary, we embrace change so much that we're really looking forward to it in the next provincial election.

Aside from that, however, I would just like to say to him that I enjoyed his remarks. Obviously his 36 years at Hydro served him well in terms of commenting on this issue. The fact that at a moment's notice, in terms of me taking my place here in the House, he swung over and talked about Hamilton and referenced Stelco, I thought was a nice touch as well, confirming the personal knowledge he has. In that regard, I intend to clip out these Hansards and put them in my Hydro file and use them very much. If down the road anyone dares challenge any of those facts in terms of the history of Hydro, Leo, I intend to tell them that they came from no less an authority than yourself. I want to thank you for that. I enjoyed it.

In the remaining seconds I would only comment to the member for Durham East, because he didn't have long enough to get caught up in the normal twists and turns that he does, that I know that Floyd Laughton is watching this, given his new role. I'm sure that your mentioning how amicable things were would have him with about six liners that he wishes he were here to deliver. Knowing I

Macdonald report title was A Framework For Competition. I don't think it precedes this government. I think the Ontario Hydro board of directors has contemplated the need to look at itself and restructure it.

I think Maurice Strong, when he attempted to redesign a more competitive, more responsive Ontario Hydro, may have gone a bit too far. I read in the paper just this past week that they're now hiring back the very people they laid off. But the new team under the current chair, Mr Farlinger, has put safety first, and that's why they've shut down — in fact they've reduced the production of the nuclear facilities by some 22%.

Competition, I believe, will keep people's eye on the task at hand. With the Energy Competition Act, Ontario plans to create a competitive business climate that promotes job creation and investment through new technologies, new services and new ways of doing business, while protecting consumers and ensuring that electrical prices are as low as possible.

One of the members today spoke of the debt that Ontario Hydro has. I'm going to quote from the financial statement or the 1996 Annual Report of Ontario Hydro. Under footnote 19 it talks about stranded debt, industry changes and asset impairment. This is a very important part of a corporation that has not, to my understanding, been responsive to the need to restructure itself. In that footnote 19 in the 1996 report it clearly says:

"The Advisory Committee on Competition in Ontario's Electricity System (the Macdonald committee) was asked to make recommendations on options for introducing competition within Ontario's electricity industry. The Macdonald committee estimated that a \$15-billion reduction in Hydro's existing debt would be required to restructure Hydro along more commercial lines and to offset unrecoverable assets. Ontario Hydro has carried out further analysis and has estimated that a debt level that is between \$10 billion and \$21 billion less than the current level would result in a more appropriate financial structure for the corporation...."

This is the 1996 report. It's a footnote on the financial statement, recognizing that perhaps somehow the industry overunleashed the whole production capacity of Ontario Hydro. This framework and competition will allow for other producer groups to emerge to make competition work in favour of the consumer.

This government isn't stuck with their head in the sand, thinking that the Power Corporation Act is unamendable. This government has the courage to look at and salvage a very fine industry by putting in place the right leadership and the right legislation to make competition work for the people of Ontario.

I'm confident, after having sat for 11 weeks with the esteemed members of the committee, that safety is first and, in the restructuring, safety will be what the consumer gets.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): I'm pleased to get up and comment on the two speeches within the shared time from the members for Lanark-Renfrew and Durham

We talk about trusting the government when it comes to a bill like Bill 35. I can only go back to many areas where we haven't been able to trust this Premier, this government. Again, it creates a little bit of anxiety among not only the major industries, the major shareholders in terms of industry in the northwest, but the consumer out there as well. Again, I thank the member for the past, but I must

Again, I thank the member for the past, but I must assure him that the thing I hear about when I speak about Ontario Hydro to any constituents is certainly the future and what the future will bring when we look at hydro in the northwest.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Lanark-Renfrew, you have two minutes.

Mr Jordan: I would like to thank all my colleagues for their very positive and kind comments. Relative to the history of Hydro, it's something that all of us in Ontario can be very proud of over the years. Something I'd like to point out on Bill 35 is that the agreement that we have across the province is also relative to municipal electric utilities, the Power Workers' Union, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and large industry. People gen-

I want to especially thank my colleague the member for Durham East for his contribution. As you know, he was a member of the Hydro select committee examining the problems for nuclear energy in Ontario, and of course his

I want to especially thank the member for Hamilton as one of the things with a nuclear plant located in it. When I said that they fear change and he said that maybe we also should be fearing the change that's coming. I guess they have already experienced it, but that's part of being here. We have to be ready for change.

Mr Speaker, from here I would say, with the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, that this bill is going to go forward with good discussion and certainly a positive end.

Mr Ramsay: I am pleased to be able to take my turn in rotation to speak on Bill 35, which really does open up competition in the generation of hydro power in Ontario. It has been said, I don't think there is that much opposition as called the Energy Competition Act. Contrary to what has been said, I don't think there is that much opposition

to this bill in this House. We certainly, and I personally, embrace the opening up for competition of hydro generation in this province. In fact, over the years, working in my northern Ontario riding of Timiskaming, constituents who wished to build very small hydro generating systems using

hydro power that is available in very small rivers without having to dam up that waterway in any way that is very destructive to the land have been frustrated by Hydro's unwillingness to embrace other and smaller forms of hydro generation. Really over the years, especially the last 40 years, they have bought almost totally into nuclear

power generation and ignored many of the alternatives, not as the one big answer versus nuclear power, but as

The member for Durham East has been involved in Hydro for a number of reasons: because he has one of the power plants in his riding, but also because he was involved in the select committee. At that time he heard about changes that needed to happen as a result of the history of Ontario Hydro, back through the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and the early 1990s. There needs to be change to be able to make Hydro go into the future.

1950 They have lots of opportunities there. They have a wonderful chairman, by the name of Bill Farlinger, who works hard to make sure that we move forward into the new century and that the new company is able to compete. He has worked very hard with the government to ensure

that Genco and Servco, the new companies, will be viable. We also have a new president, by the name of Ron Osborne, who has come from Bell, and before that from Maclean-Hunter. Both of those men bring a great deal of business experience. I believe they are prepared to work

like to thank my colleagues for their comments today.

MR. MICHIGANS: I too would like to just comment on the remarks made by the member for Lanark-Renfrew and thank him for the history. As the member for Hamilton Centre has indicated, these two will be in my portfolio when I go into the next all-members' debate on Ontario. He's given us some very good facts and only on Ontario

the history of Hydro but also his personal involvement, which I think is important to know. He talks about Niagara Falls and the Christmas lights coming on and all that kind of stuff.

watching this right now are really concerned about the future. The member mentioned Red Lake. Yes, there is a great amount of industrial growth in terms of mining and activity around the mining in Red Lake, but I can't tell you how worried industry is when it comes to

what the hydro rates are going to do to them, whether it be mining in Red Lake, as the member has indicated, whether it be the forestry industry, the pulp and paper mills that we so much depend on in northern Ontario, or whether it be the regular consumer out there — all a great amount of

concern.

supplementing the way Hydro could supply and generate

power to Ontario.

I've always thought that was a shame, but this act will

correct that when Ontario Hydro is broken up into two corporations, one being entrusted with the supply of power and the other with the transmission of power. The generating company, Genco, will not only be able to purchase power from the Ontario-owned generating assets that will become part of that company, but will also be able to consider bids, applications, from other power generators from outside the province that would transmit power into the province, or other entities like some of the constituents I've represented in the past who would like to open and operate their own generating systems within the province. Genco would, at a competitive rate through market forces, be forced to consider purchasing that power and putting it into the grid system. That's an excellent change and something that is needed.

I forgot to mention to the member for Lanark-Renfrew when he mentioned 25-cycle power that it's very interesting that up until two years ago the very last hydro line in Ontario that had 25-cycle power ran from Timmins to Virgatiatown, Ontario, where there was a gold mine. That gold mine was in existence for over 60 years and all of its equipment underground ran on 25-cycle power. As long as that mine was viable, Hydro had been forced to supply that 25-cycle power to that mine. I see the member is there. I'm referring to the Kerr Addison mine in Virgatiatown and talking about the very last 25-cycle line that was in existence up until about two years ago. Unfortunately, different events conspired to put that mine to an end, but it had 60 very good years and, as I said, ran on 25-cycle power.

We embrace this change because, from the very glowing history that the previous speaker gave about Hydro, in that last 40 years, like many other very big corporations, it became a monolith. I suppose "monolith" in this case is probably a very nice way of saying a monster, because that's what it became. It became a monster but it became a kind of a multi-headed monster. The nuclear head was extremely powerful and tended to dominate the rest of the body of that monster. In fact, when many members have talked about the investment into Darlington, that nuclear monster of Hydro was so powerful that it would intimidate governments into the belief that they had to continue to support the investment to build the Darlington nuclear generation system. While, "Yes, we've spent maybe \$2 billion to \$3 billion at this one particular point in time and we have to spend some more," which eventually I think came to over \$12 billion to build Darlington, the threat always was there, and not just so veiled, that you certainly wouldn't want to be the government responsible for having the lights shut off in Ontario. Of course, no government would want to be responsible for that, and Hydro became almost a threatening monster to whatever government of whatever stripe came into being in Ontario.

2000

I guess what has really brought all this to a head is Hydro's inability to manage that nuclear monster. Unfort-

I hope that through this reorganization the old entity of Ontario Hydro will be able to reorganize itself, through this act, that it will be able to build anew, with a fresh start, as it did in 1906 with Adam Beck, when he had that dream of a publicly owned power utility in this province. It was a tremendous dream, and the dream really is still alive. Even though we have competition, this formula captures a unique combination of a public utility owned by the people of Ontario while at the same time allowing some competition to enter the system so that Ontarians can be assured — and I hope they will be assured — of the cheapest possible power available.

In all the deliberations here in this House, we have not had a commitment from the Minister of Energy, Jim Wilson, that we will get the cheapest power available in the country. Up until a few years ago, that was always the case in Ontario. Ontario led the way in North America of the cheapest power. That has not been the case over the last few years, and I hope that through this needed reorganization we will get back to Ontario being a leader in providing clean, low-cost electrical power.

Today, "clean" is an operative word. We have to ensure that we don't just go for the very cheapest power source, which might be coal, for example, which can be, if it's unscrubbed, through the chimney system, one of the dirtiest sources of power available. As previous members have said tonight, our air has been getting dirtier over the years, and we cannot let this new entity produce power at any cost. That would be wrong, and it's going to be important for Genco, the new generating entity, to ensure that all suppliers to that generating arm of Hydro supply power not only at the very best cost but by using the very cleanest method of producing that power.

In fact, I would say that if it came down to a choice between cost and the cleanliness of producing it, we have to err on the side of the environment and ensure that we are producing power in the cleanest way possible. That has to be done. Next, though, it has to be the most economical way of producing it, for sure.

I wish the minister well with this, and the new entities, Hydro is preparing his corporation for that split. From that will be formed the two agencies within those companies. The one agency we look at with much curiosity is the agency that is going to take the debt, and that will be the Ontario Hydro Financial Corp. That poor little company — that's not a company I'd like to be part of — will inherit a \$32-billion debt. That is going to be a problem, and we haven't seen the hocus-pocus magic yet from this government as to how we are going to be able to manage that debt, let alone try to pay that down, without

the investment, they have actually shut down the B station at Pickering as well as the A station at the Bruce site. I still want to remain committed to saying that this restructuring is not just an issue of nuclear; it's an issue of the proper utilization of all the assets and investments. After all, that debt load, that \$30-billion debt they have, is shouldered by every Ontario citizen. We heard during those public consultations that there are other modes of production, as the member for Timiskaming has mentioned, whether it's wind, gas-fired plants or indeed selling our excess capacity, at certain grid times, to other parts of North America. In an open economy, there are a lot of choices for Ontario Hydro, as well as the generation side, to include many more options for production. That's what we heard during the public hearings process. Thank you for the remarks, to the member for Timiskaming.

Mr Michals: I have just a few comments about the remarks made by the member for Timiskaming. He talked about competition in the area of hydro. Throughout the northwest and particularly in the far north, there are communities that are certainly looking forward to the development of small hydro-electric plants, I guess you would call them. A good number of them are presently on diesel generation, and I'm talking about the remote ones, and they depend at the present time on the Ontario Hydro system. Sometimes that can become fairly frustrating for them. The member for Timiskaming made a good point in terms of bringing these communities forward, off diesel generation, and the development of their systems, where they could possibly put something back into the grid as well.

2010
He talked a little about Genco and what's going to happen in terms of the purchase of the grid system. I think there is a great amount of fear out there. People are anxious about the fact that they, as the taxpayers and citizens of Ontario, are responsible for what we're calling an orphan debt, some \$32 billion. The taxpayers are quite concerned about that. We come back to the issue of trust: Can we trust this government to handle that property in Bill 35, and how we can actually move forward with that? I compare it to a good many parts of legislation we've seen from this government already. In the northwest, their track record is not good when it comes to trust. We have to talk about the Lands for Life and compare this to that process. There is absolutely no trust. It gives me a little bit of anxiety as well.

Mr Marchese: I'm happy to see the member for Timiskaming as sanguine as he is. He obviously has a great deal of faith that this can be pulled off relatively well and for the benefit of the consumers, or at least he hopes. I don't have the same hope or trust. I believe there is an underlying problem behind all of this. He believes that competition is going to be good, in his mind, that the market forces will take over and rates will go down, but that, in my view, is only a hope. I don't believe it goes beyond hope. I believe this is a fundamental problem. If we're going to see competition in hydro rates as we see the competition in mortgage rates, he's not going to

increasing the cost of power to the users in Ontario. That is going to be the big trick here. That will be the slight-of-hand they'll have to do. That will be the magician's trick that will have to occur, the smoke and mirrors, if you will.

We're all going to be watching that, because ultimately all of us as Ontarians are responsible for that \$32-billion debt, just as we are responsible for the government's debt. Over the years the government of Ontario, all governments, has guaranteed that debt of Ontario Hydro. It's now going to be called an orphan debt. It now will be transferred to this company, yet we are all responsible for it. That is still an answer we're waiting for from this government, as to how that debt is to be managed. It must be managed if Ontario is to be a world leader with clean and cheap power.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Comments and questions?

Mr Christopherson: I'm pleased to rise and comment on the remarks for Timiskaming. I jotted it down while he talked about the cheapest power, that that was always one of our strengths, as it should be, given the ability to produce hydro-electric power. But when he talked about the cheapest power, meaning of course the cheapest rates — he mentioned it later on in his comments, but I think the two are directly linked; I don't think it ought to just follow in a speech one after the other — the stranded debt and how much of it becomes stranded debt and who pays for it has as much to do with factoring in the cost of hydro as the actual bills that are sent out by the new entities. Obviously, the stranded debt that is kept on by the new corporations is going to be factored into their costs, which would somewhat inhibit the ability to have the cheapest rates based on pure production costs.

On the other hand, if it's offloaded and it no longer appears on the books of the new corporation, I grant you, the bills every month won't have that factored in, but we as Ontarians will be paying that somewhere else. Given the fact that the amount of debt has not been identified and that the minister has incredible unilateral power — ironically, to use a pun — to decide how much and who gets it, we, in scrutinizing this bill, need to be very focused on what happens to this stranded debt as it relates to what the costs are going to be for power for consumers, because consumers and taxpayers, vis-a-vis Hydro, are indeed one and the same.

Mr O'Toole: I'm pleased to respond to the member for Timiskaming. I'd like to include a couple of remarks with respect to safety. I think it's very important to my constituents, as it is to all of our constituents. On the nuclear side, two thirds of the electrical production is from nuclear. In the last year, there has been a decline of some 22%. You have to recognize the quick action of the board of directors under Farlinger to bring in the integrated independent performance assessment team to look at the decline in the production capabilities. As you know, they came up with the nuclear asset optimization plan, called NAOP, where money was set aside to bring the operations up to a higher standard of performance. In the interest of

get a break and neither are his northern friends. The mortgage rates, some people might argue, are very competitive. Well, they're all the same. It doesn't mean that if you bring another 10 banks into Canada you're going to get better, competitive rates. I argue that you're not going to get it. This competition is not necessarily going to give you, in and of itself, lower rates. In fact, this competition could very well bring in environmental risks that I talked about earlier. While the bill says the minister may impose emission caps on outside generators, there is no guarantee that he will do so. My view is that competition won't bring rates down, but it will bring in cheap coal and therefore great environmental disasters for us.

By the way, I have no faith; maybe the member for Timiskaming does. I think hydro rates in the north are going to skyrocket. I believe we are controlling rates at the moment through the system we've got. Once you break it open, I'm not sure you're going to have the same protections. We see some smug Liberal faces on the other side. Maybe they believe it. Let's look to it and see if it happens.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Timiskaming has two minutes to respond.

Mr Ramsay: I'd like to thank all the members who commented on my speech. In closing, I would like to comment on the very issue that the member just talked about; that is, rural rates. Representing a northern riding and a predominantly rural riding, the rural rate structure of Ontario Hydro is extremely important, as it is to many members of this House.

We have to realize that the second-largest industry in this province is the agri-food industry. It is extremely reliant upon good, clean electrical power at a good cost. That's very important. The rural rate structure is extremely important for the viability of rural economic development and our agricultural community. That is something we have had some assurances from the minister on, and we will certainly hold him to that, that the rural rate structure is there for not only the north but southwestern Ontario, eastern Ontario, all of rural Ontario. Rather than fearmonger, I guess we'll have to wait and take the minister at his word.

We'll certainly keep him to his word that it is going to be there, because it's extremely important. It's an equalization of power rates, if you will, within this province that gives rural and northern people a bit of a competitive advantage, puts us on a level playing field with other parts of the province when it comes to access to electrical energy. While we strive for new developments, having that ability to access electrical power at a very good competitive rate means that whether you're in the east or the southwest or the north, you would be able to develop that agricultural industry or that sawmill or that mine or that will processing the minerals of that mine. That will be there because you have access to cheap energy. That's going to be very important. All of us in this House, especially from this side and especially those who represent rural ridings, will certainly be watching this government to make sure those rural rates are low.

Mr Poulin: Of course we support competition. The New Democratic Party has long recognized that the essence of our system is based on competition. One only need visit any marketplace to readily agree with competition. But we don't support competition at any cost. There are some conditions, some checkmarks that you must adhere to, that must be examined in closer scrutiny. Competition in terms of Ontario Hydro needed to be done; make no mistake about it. I for one and we as a party support competition at Ontario Hydro. But our anxiety is most legitimate, because when you buy a corporation, you get the assets and you also get the liability. When we look at the liabilities of the said Ontario Hydro, they're very much in debt. In fact, they've exhausted almost every possibility of borrowing. The debt is \$32 billion, if you can comprehend such a vast sum. On top of that, when it costs them more to borrow, Ontario Hydro turns around and borrows from your Canada pension plan. They owe the Canada pension plan C\$2.747 billion, and in US dollars another \$137 million. Some of the members opposite are saying, "Who's going to pay for the debt?"

Ontarians will.

Ontario Hydro is independent. The debt is backed by the province of Ontario, but it is a separate entity. It does not, except by some statutes, answer to the province of Ontario. But since the debt is so massive, they need the broad shoulders of all Ontarians to tap capital markets.

When I look at the Ontario debt — this is the budget book, page 118, 1990. You will recall, perhaps somewhat vividly if you followed politics in 1990, that the Ontario debt was \$39 billion. It was \$89 billion in 1995, and then on June 8 — remember the ill-fated day, the day that will go down in history, when a revolution started in this very province? Who would have thought? I didn't expect a revolution of such magnitude to take place. But they placed ads in the papers and some of them answered the ads, and they hung on and coat-tailed the top guy, the Premier, and a few members of his entourage, and by a stroke of political good fortune for them, they found themselves right here at Queen's Park. We welcomed them. They still had this little manifesto. At first I thought it was a blue version of Mao's red book, but for those people Maoists are to be found only in Maui, so there is no fear.

They had this little revolutionary document. It talked about the NDP debt; it talked about what the Progressive Conservative reform was going to do in the next four or five years of their mandate. At every move they were applauded by all the backbenchers. There was only one train leaving the station then, and the spear carriers, the foot soldiers, were right on the platform, supporting the driver, the engineer. They were going to put things in good order. I can assure you, there is no such thing with these people. They can run a boutique, they can run a shop. Let me tell you: in 1995 debt \$89 billion; in 1999 it will be \$110 billion — four years after. What gives?

Mr Christopherson: It can't be. You must be reading it wrong. Is that the government book?

Mr. Pouliot: It comes from the Office of the Premier, the Minister of Finance. On top of that, they're not

counting the debt of Ontario Hydro. Ontario Hydro owes \$32 billion, plus it's going to cost them another \$10 billion to overhaul Hydro; it costs a lot of money to repair their nuclear plants.

Now they're saying, "We want some competition to give you cheaper rates." Ontario Hydro is saying, not too

loudly because they have to abide by the marching orders, "How will we be able to pay our debt as a private entity,

supposedly separate from government, if you don't give us the ability to make a profit?" Their mandate is to produce

electricity at cost; at a reasonable price and at cost. "At cost" means including factoring in the debt; that's part of

the cost. We've talked about the government's inability to

balance the books. They are saying right here that they will go from \$89 billion to \$115 billion. We know that

Ontario Hydro will add possibly another \$10 billion within three or four years to that debt.

Keep watching the coupons; you know, when you

watch the financial paper? A friend of mine in Manitowadge reads financial papers at least three times a

week. We go for a coffee and he tells me, "Look at these" — he calls them coupons; I guess they're the bonds and

debentures. There are the federal ones. He won't mind me saying this. Harry is not a very exciting fellow, but I'll say

something about Harry: He knows debentures, he knows bonds, he knows debt, because he partly makes a living at

it. Mark my words, they will have to increase the dividend. In other words, because they are a higher risk,

because of the massive debt and their inability in a competitive marketplace to raise more money, unless they

wish to raise electricity rates, they will have to pay an eighth, sometimes a quarter on long-term bonds. A quarter

of a percentage point is not much, but you multiply over 30 years and the dollars start to mount. When you're

talking about long-term massive debt, it means, if I may be so bold, one heck of a difference.

I believed, because they said so, that they would bring an uncanny ability to cut, cut, cut. It's the fourth year of

their mandate and they have a \$4.8-billion to \$5.1-billion deficit, depending where you look for the accounts. I'm

very disappointed in the government in terms of fiscality, that they are not capable, in times of unprecedented

prosperity — my friend Harry tells me that this is the longest bull market ever. He tells me, "Gilles, a bull

market is when things go up." The price of commodities is in the dumps a bit but manufacturing is doing very well.

Cars are selling very well. You go to Wal-Mart or you go to Canadian Tire and you trip over one another. I know,

because Harry also says, "Be careful, because consumer debt is also at an all-time high and consumer saving is at

an all-time low." You've got to blend all this. But when you talk about Ontario Hydro, there is no

guarantee that the new kid on the block will put money forward to fund massive projects. Remember those days of

the ice storm? Eastern Ontario was massively impacted.

Would a private entrepreneur render the same service in

Ottawa and other fine places in Ontario? I don't think so, because the bottom line is that it's profit-motivated.

We have nothing against profit. We encourage profits. We applaud when people do well, because communities

do equally well. But there are many questions that need to be examined, need to be answered. It's a big boat. It's not

that simple. What about the environment, Speaker? Were you

outside today? It's muggy. Some people can hardly breathe, they have to stay indoors, because the humidity

reading at 3 o'clock reached 38 degrees. It might make it worse.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mrs. Johns: I'm going to leave it to one of my colleagues to talk about the creative accounting that was

being done by the member for Lake Nipigon. I would like to remind him, though, that he lives in Canada and it's

Revenue Canada as opposed to the IRS. What's important to recognize is that when we're

talking about Ontario Hydro and the change that is going to go on, what happens right now is that Ontario Hydro

already has this debt. Through years of mismanagement and change and just from doing things very differently, it

and change pay money to Ontario Hydro and Ontario Hydro

pays back some of that debt every year. Last year they paid back \$600 million. They will continue to do that for

the ensuing two years. Debt is being paid down now, and it will be paid down after we go through the process.

What's going to happen, as outlined in sections 51 through 81 of the act, is that all the assets and liabilities

will come out of Ontario Hydro and they will go into this financial holding company. The assets will be valued for

Genco and Servco, and liabilities will be associated with those debts that are fair and reasonable for them to carry.

Admittedly, there will be some debt that isn't covered by assessors, and we will have to pick that up through a number

of different charges, and the government has outlined these charges in the book. We will continue, though, to

pay off the debt as we have in the past. This should not lead to an increase in hydro rates. We're paying off \$600

million now and we will continue to pay off millions of dollars in the future.

Mr. Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I'd like to thank the member for Lake Nipigon for his very informative words.

Although he didn't really stick to the issue, to Bill 35, I think he did so in his very unique and informative way.

Really, what he talked about was the revolution and the reforms in the revolution, how the revolution affected the

Conservative ideas and how the Conservative ideas became Reform. Some people would call them the

Reformers as opposed to the revolutionaries. What the member for Lake Nipigon was trying to say

was that his friend Harry put up lots of flags for us to be aware of. Harry sees a lot more in this than maybe we in the House or the average Ontarian, and Harry is con-

cerned about what is going to take place with Bill 35. What the member for Lake Nipigon warned us about is

They have had a monopoly. We haven't had the privilege of asking somebody else whether we can buy it cheaper, because if you want hydro, you've got one choice. I guess you could produce a little bit of your own if you had a big enough windmill on top of your house or if you had a little generator out behind the garage or something along that line, but it's a pretty minimal amount of power that you can do other than buy it from Ontario Hydro.

2040

It's a greater choice for the customers. They may be able to buy it from somebody producing hydro in California, and you can buy it here in Toronto, you can buy it in Ontario, and you might even be able to buy it up in Lake Nipigon; the opportunity to buy that at a better price. Yes, we've had five years of frozen rates and it stayed very steady, and we want to continue that. The potential for the system widely improves the safety and the reliability of environmental protection. I know and you know that there's a lot of water supply in this province that can be put to good use as far as turning turbines and it doesn't hurt the environment. It's one of the friendliest things we have. We always have to worry about the fish, but that can be looked after.

There's more efficient distribution of electricity, a more businesslike approach to the system, planning and investment, a better overall balance between supply and demand, and improvement to the overall financial health of the system.

With the Energy Competition Act, Ontario plans to create a competitive business climate that promotes jobs. I know that's a hard thing for you people to hear, "to promote jobs," but with building a few new turbines and creating a few new jobs, these people might even come to work some day. When they're going to work, using a little bit of electricity, getting paid for it, the other thing they do is pay taxes. Those are the things we need to have to put us into the right kind of position so that we can continue to pay down that debt that we inherited.

For example, in New South Wales, Australia, with consumer choice — and they only started it in 1996; I think some of you people can remember back as far as 1996 — they've experienced a 20% to 40% saving already since 1996 because they have choice. If it works in Australia, it might even work someplace else called Canada and it might even work someplace else called Ontario. My goodness, it might even work in downtown Toronto. They might even get a little bit better rate than they have.

In Victoria, Australia, in 1993, there was a major investment of US\$18 billion, with a 6% decline in customer prices. Those are the kinds of things you can read about. You sit over there all day long and keep saying, "It's never seen any place else." I don't know what you're looking into, but it would be nice to take the lid off another bucket, take a look in and see that something is working someplace else in the world, because it is.

You talked about England and a few minutes ago. In England and Wales, legislation took effect in 1990 and residential prices fell by 15%. I don't know about you, but

I can well remember, in the rural riding that I represent now, new lines being put in, new buildings being wired. I remember going into some buildings that had coal oil lanterns in them, and they weren't hunting camps; and barns the same way.

Hydro has progressed, but one thing that progressed a lot faster was our debt. The debt all of a sudden ballooned out of control. That has caused us a lot of problems.

I know in the riding of Quinte, the Trent River used to provide a lot of power. It's very fine and free to the environment. It's water power, water turbines. I know we have three or four people who have bought up property on that river and are only waiting to see this bill passed and put through so they can start to develop and build and put that power in our lines and put it out to the community. When those people invest — and that's private money that can generate off that river. I know the Trent River at times, in the spring, has an extremely heavy flow of water and in the summertime it drops down like all the rest, but it still generates a lot of power.

In my riding we have two paper mills that work on the Trent system and they have turbines relatively close to their power. We have a couple of villages and cities further up the Trent that generate their own power. I think when this bill comes into play, this is something we'll be able to allow those people to develop.

I know they worry about the stranded debt, but with every kilowatt that is put through those power lines, a portion of that will be put towards our debt. I think most of us will live long enough to see that debt paid off. I know the opposition party over here thinks that will never happen, but in other jurisdictions around the world, for example, in England, Wales, Australia, Argentina and even in California — and I think some of my good friends across the way might have slipped down to California at one time or another.

The member for Lake Nipigon spoke about Harry, that he had a lot of things. I don't know whether he was referring to Harry Rosen or Harry the stockbroker. I'm not too sure which he was talking to.

Interjection: He deals with them both.

Mr. Rollins: He has a lot of dealings with both. Maybe one has a better rapport than the other. I'm not sure, but I know there are other jurisdictions in the world that have that kind of competition. Other provinces such as Alberta have opened up the market. It is widely accepted in the essential services to deliver safe, reliable electricity, with many partners in the business. I think that's a very great opportunity.

New opportunities will emerge in the North American electrical industry, changes from monopoly-based to one of competition. Evidence shows that electricity restructuring bring many positive benefits, including — and listen to this — a fair price based on competition in a market that's open to many buyers and sellers.

As a buyer, whether you're buying clothes or whether you're buying electricity, I think it's important to you to have that opportunity to be able to buy where you see fit.

We have never had that opportunity with Ontario Hydro.

I would call 15% off my Hydro bill a win. I would call

that pretty near a raise in pay.

In Argentina in 1992 there was foreign investment; four

new generators in 1993. Wholesale prices eventually fell

by 60% and then stabilized at 40% below former prices.

These are facts. An estimated US\$7 billion is expected to

be invested in the industry between 1996 and 2001 in

Argentina.

If Argentina can get American dollars into their invest-

ment market, why can't we in Ontario generate the same

kind of climate with the same kind of payback so that we

can suffer from that terrible thing: a decrease in the cost of

electricity? I don't know whether Harry down there at the

stock market or Harry at the clothes market can handle

that decrease, but I know there are lots of rural people in

Ontario who can handle that kind of decrease.

Mr Pouliot: Go to Quebec and see how it's done.

Mr Rollins: They say, "Go to Quebec." Quebec has

their problems but Quebec has a pile of hydro that's being

produced off that water. We don't have the pleasure of

having quite such a big river running down through the

middle of our province as Quebec has. However, that

hydro can come on the open market and maybe some little

town like Belleville or Ottawa wants to be able to buy that

power from Quebec at a lot cheaper price and put it into

the system. It might just happen to be a little bit of winner

for us here in our town. We need to worry about putting

the price down and making sure that price stays low.

When we look at all these other places around the

world that have put some effort into opening up the mar-

ket, into improvements for hydro users, regardless of

where they are in the world, that only happened to do one

thing: It was to see a little bit of a decrease in the hydro

bill.

We all agree that we need flexibility. We need to have

the laws in position so we can have that choice, to be able

to pick up the phone and sign a contract with somebody

who can produce that power. We need to have it guaran-

teeed. We need to have some positions put in that we can

stop anybody else from producing it around the world or

any place that we can hook up with here. Please give us

that choice.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I want to

congratulate my friend and neighbour from South Hastings

on quite a good speech. He is, as always, a very practical

man about these matters and he certainly raised a lot of

quite good observations, although I did think he spent — I

wasn't able to hear the entire speech, but I heard a good

bit of it. He was quite enthusiastic in cheering the sunrise.

I don't really gather that the sunrise is a matter about

which there is much dispute or about which there is a

great complaint.

Mr Gilchrist: I'll give you half a chance.

Mr Conway: There's my friend, the redoubtable

member for Scarborough East. He's more compelling on

the subject of public morality in election campaigns, but

that's another subject.

I just want to say to the member from South Hastings

that I think there is support on all sides about competition,

particularly in generation. Ontario Hydro came to have a

near monopoly on that front and that did not serve the

province well. The concern that many of his constituents

in rural Hastings have, as they would have in much of

rural eastern Ontario, is, will the benefits accrue as

completely and as quickly to Main Street, to small-town

and rural customers, as the benefits of this policy will

clearly accrue to Bay Street, the investment community

and large industrial or wholesale customers?

The answer to that question will be in the policy itself.

The policy is being advertised and certainly being support-

ed in the main, because all of us hope and pray that the

benefits are going to be of equal measure, not just for big

customers but for residential and farm customers, and that

people living in places like Thurlow and Sidney township

are going to see those benefits, not just in the same

measure but at about the same time as Bay Street and the

big customers will see them.

Mr Pouliot: I want to commend the member for

Quinte. From time to time we talk about commodities, be

it oil and gas, natural gas, market conditions, and now I

see he has shown a similar interest in hydro.

As the member for Renfrew has said, we will support

any new competition. We repeat this: We're all in favour

of competition. But what we wish to raise is the following,

among others: What about the environment? Technically,

how will you service the \$32-billion debt? Who will

assume the responsibility? What about service? What

about reliability? What about funding of new projects?

What about emergencies? Who will benefit? Will it be

Falconbridge, which is the single largest client of Ontario

Hydro? Will the average and small consumer have access

to it? What will our policy be on imports? Will it be 50%

hydro and the rest nuclear?

Those questions are legitimate, and I say to the member

for Quinte, the people wish to know. As consumers living

in Manitouwadge, we're not going to go out tomorrow or

the day you muscle this bill through and start spending our

money. We're not going to go to — well, we don't have

such stores. I see Moore's, the suit people, their sensation-

al summer clearout, and I say to the people: "Don't do

that. Don't come and spend 120 bucks on a suit and your

Ontario Hydro savings will put it into your pocket,

because it might not be there."

We're waiting, we're anxious, but we wish to get

answers to our questions —

The Acting Speaker: Time has expired. Comments

and questions?

Mrs Johns: I'd like to thank the member for Quinte for

his presentation. It was a good presentation and it hits

home for us rural members who deal every day with farms

and different things in our ridings. We're very concerned

about the power that we need to have to run those rural

establishments.

The government was very concerned about this when

they were putting the bill together. As a result of that, the

Harry was watching the show tonight and he was thinking of buying a suit someplace else other than his place. I think it would be quite a shock to Harry if he was listening and saw it on television. Maybe that's why he kept the advertisement of that suit turned a little bit sideways.

But I think that the guarantee of the rural rate structure being in place in the back of the county, back in Renfrew and in north Hastings and all throughout rural Ontario, that guarantee needs to be there. We also have to keep in mind that the rate for downtown Toronto, where there's lots of hydro being used, is still one of the highest cost structures to deliver that service that there is in Ontario. That's an interesting factor when you think that there's so much hydro used right downtown here, and yet the cost of delivering that service to those people, where it's very heavily populated, is extremely high. That probably is due to the fact that more work needs to be done on the supply service management of how to provide that service to the customers in that local area of downtown Toronto.

I want to also remind you that the environment has certainly been one of our leading concerns. That was one of the reasons all of us have heard that there were some nuclear generating stations closed down and taken out of service in just the last little while, because there may have been an opportunity to question the safety of those being there and we could have had a disaster. I want to compliment Hydro for being on top of that and making sure that was shut down.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): I'm pleased to join the debate this evening on Bill 35, the Energy Competition Act. Let me begin by repeating what our critic so ably said, that yes indeed change is needed in Ontario's electricity marketplace. Our party and our leader, Dalton McGuinty, support a move towards competition. But competition has to provide advantages to all people in the market, particularly consumers, and it has got to apply those advantages and benefits equally across regions and across economic groups. We want to ensure, through broad public consultation, that this bill and the government's plans for Ontario Hydro don't favour big industrial or urban users over residential and particularly rural users.

All of us once in a while have to be reminded how important safe, reliable, low-cost energy is to economic development. We are going to have to do this change properly. We want to have an opportunity to have significant input into the bill and significant debate, because there are some significant issues which we don't believe the government has properly responded to.

First, who is going to get stuck paying for that \$32-billion debt? Is it going to be retail, farm electricity consumers? Is it going to be average taxpayers? Who will pay for Hydro's \$8-billion plan to bring its nuclear plants up to par? Who is going to pay for that? Will industry regulators be able to be tough watchdogs, with the power to make sure that Mike Harris's plan does not result in windfall profits for companies and higher costs to consumers? Those are the three main questions we want to

government decided that we needed to maintain the status quo, if you will, for rural rate assistance. The bill doesn't change that at all. For the members who have looked at section 78 in this act, which talks about rural rate assistance. We believe the rural customer must have an equitable access to reasonably priced power. They also have to compete and they need a level playing field. We have made sure that happens within this bill.

Right now, there are approximately 600,000 Ontarians who are able to get rural rate assistance. It's very important for electricity users in both northern Ontario and rural Ontario. We have grandfathered those people, 600,000 people in housing establishments and 100,000 farms, and they will continue to receive the rural rate assistance that they've received in the past.

I think this bill is very good news for rural Ontario and northern Ontario residents. They get the benefits that might flow to them as a result of a competitive market-place and at the same time they're guaranteed that they will have the rural rate assistance they have been receiving for many years.

Mr Michals: Just a few comments about the member for Quinte's remarks: He talked a little bit about rates; the previous speaker as well. Again, I go back to some of my initial comments where I indicated that folks throughout the north are really concerned about what Bill 35 will do in terms of their particular rates. We watch gas rates in the province, and as they go up in southern Ontario, they go up doubly in northern Ontario. There is a great deal of anxiety around this.

He talked a little bit about other jurisdictions where this is being done. I would like to know what those other areas are looking at in terms of the actual debt. We've heard a lot about the debt here in terms of Hydro as it is now, the orphan debt. We've heard a good amount about that. It all goes back to the anxiety among the taxpayers as to not only what they'll be paying in the future, in rural and northern Ontario, but what they will assume in terms of that actual debt.

He talked a little bit about the question of trust when it came to the actual development of hydro. I go back to the lack of trust for this present government. The use of water is something that we in the north are certainly interested in, in terms of the development of hydro generation, the use of the many sources of water we have up there. I spoke earlier about communities in my riding that are relying on diesel generation at the present time and on Hydro to come up and work out these plans with diesel generation, but who are certainly looking forward to the use of their water resources in the future. He touched a little bit on that.

Again, I would just like to compliment him on his remarks this evening.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Quinte has two

minutes to respond.

Mr Rollins: I would like to thank my colleagues from Renfrew, Lake Nipigon, Huron and Kenora for the comments. I was a little bit shocked to see that my friend from Lake Nipigon would hold up a sign like that in case

debate here tonight as part of second reading debate and have an opportunity to talk about throughout this province through public hearings.

Let me take a moment to talk about the debt. It's currently estimated at somewhere between \$30 billion and \$32 billion. On June 9, Hydro's chair, Bill Farlinger, stated that Hydro's nuclear problems, that is, fixing or decommissioning seven nuclear reactors, could drive the debt as high as \$47 billion.

2100

Members in this House know, but I'll remind the people out there who are listening to and watching this debate attentively, that all of us, all of Ontario's taxpayers, are on the hook for that debt. When Hydro's operations are split into two corporations, the new corporations will not be able to cover the cost of supporting this debt while still competing in the new electricity marketplace. The portion of Hydro's debt that will have to be left with the government in order for the new corporations to be called competitive is called the stranded debt. It's estimated that up to \$20 billion of Hydro's debt will be stranded. Mr Farlinger, by the way, said it could be up to \$30 billion of stranded debt.

Stranded debt is an interesting term because in fact it's not really stranded at all. Ultimately it's our responsibility, and how we set up this competitive energy market will determine to a large extent how the burden of dealing with that debt is shared and whether that burden is shared equally.

The government has said that it plans to table a report on the level of debt and options for covering the cost of the debt. It has some options, and let's remember what they are: a charge to taxpayers, a special charge to electricity consumers and/or generators. They say they'll give us that in July. We'll look forward to that, because like most of the people in this province we don't take the government at its word. We want to see the detail. So often much is hidden in the detail. What's that old saying? "The devil's in the detail." Well, in the case of this government no statement was ever more true.

We haven't talked a lot tonight about environmental issues. In my community of Windsor, right across the river, literally right across the river, they're about to fire up a Connors Creek coal-burning generating station to help offset peak demand for ConEd in Detroit — coal-burning, with all its attendant problems.

Bill 35 will allow the government to define pollution disclosure standards for electricity so that customers could choose the most environmentally friendly supplier. I'm looking forward to that — this coming from a government that shut down air quality monitoring stations, from a government that can't enforce fines on polluters in this province, from a government whose record is acknowledged by all independent observers to be abysmal. We simply don't trust, nor do we have the inclination to take anything seriously. We can't ignore what this is going to do, and that ties us in to the nuclear power restructuring that's going on.

The main plan for reducing the shutdown nuclear power stations in the short term is to increase production at coal-powered plants in Mississauga, Nanticoke and Lambton — coal-powered, coal-generated power.

The Minister of the Environment just this week talked about those horrible people in Michigan lighting up Connors Creek again. Yet at the very same time his government is turning in the short term — and that's what Consolidated Edison's plan is in Michigan — to coal-burning facilities, pollution-generating facilities, to deal with the problems created, admittedly, by a succession of governments that have not been able to come to terms with the reality of nuclear power.

I remember the Davis government was tortured by Darlington. I remember Liberal Treasurer Bob Nixon used to refer to Darlington as a black hole where money always went in and never came out. The New Democratic Party government wrestled with the issue. This government's taking us into a new field, introducing competition. The broad strokes of that policy we support, but we have to have answers to those questions and we have to be prepared as a Legislature to debate them completely and honestly when we deal with the important questions: the question of the debt, the question of what we do with our nuclear power facilities and the question of how we regulate.

The last point I wanted to make this evening deals with how this process will unfold from here, because this government has not brought forward lobbyist registration legislation. We think when you embark on a process that is this big, that involves this much money, that involves this kind of introduction to competition, there should be an open and transparent manner by which this Legislature and, by extension, the people of Ontario can judge the fairness of that process and who gets into it.

This government, unfortunately, doesn't take those matters seriously. So we say to the government, as you embark on this, as you embark on introducing competition, as you embark on bringing in more money — more money for elections, you've done that — how you let contracts for casinos and how you deal with this will say a lot about how the process eventually will work out. We'll be watching that carefully too because that issue, combined with this province and its people.

Mr Christopherson: I am pleased to respond to the remarks of the member for Windsor-Walkerville. I would again like to focus on the issue, and it was one of the ones the member focused on, of the stranded debt. The fact that if you look in the legislation there's an awful lot of trust being placed in the hands — certainly power, I guess the question is whether there should be trust — but certainly the opportunity to do as they will, and in order for people to feel good about it, they would have to trust the government. When we look at the track record of this government in terms of trust that's been placed in their hands, you come up abysmally short.

Certainly on the whole issue of democracy, never mind falling short, you didn't even hit the screen, and I'm led to believe that we may see another motion tomorrow regarding time allocation on this bill also, which I think makes four time-allocation bills in the same number of days. So democracy in terms of trust is not anything anybody can rely on.

The government said during the election campaign, "Trust us, we wouldn't do anything to hurt health care. Trust us, we wouldn't do anything to hurt education. Trust us, we wouldn't do anything to hurt the disabled," and yet in every one of those areas major damage has been done in terms of the perspective of the average middle-class working family.

Certainly not your wealthy, powerful friends; they're all taken care of. That's the fear. The fear is that in watching you manage \$32 billion of this debt in a way that is supposed to reflect the needs of the average person, there is no trust. There is a real concern your track record will be where you'll be in the future, and that is taking care of your friends.

Mrs. Johns: I would like to thank the member opposite for his comments. I think generally he was supportive of where we're moving. I understand he has some issues and I'd like to talk to those issues.

The first thing I think is important is that people out there do have trust in this government. They have trust in this government that we're good managers, good fiscal managers, and that's what we're going to do with Ontario Hydro. We're going to fiscally manage it. It's \$32 billion in debt. It's been in debt since time immemorial and it's time for people to manage the system and to bring it into the 21st century.

We are going to manage the system. We have the trust of the stakeholders. We have the trust of Ontario Hydro. We have the trust of the union, if you can believe that, and the environmental groups that this is the right thing. This bill, this act, has been accepted by all groups: consumers, unions, environmentalists, they're all saying that we have consulted, we've gone through a good process, and we will continue to do that.

The member from the NDP says, "They're going to time-allocate it." I find it amazing that we would have to do this in this bill. The Liberals like the bill. They want to work through the process with us to make sure that we are moving in the right direction. You would think that the NDP would want to get out there and hear what stakeholders have to say. But no, they're going to try and drag their heels through Thursday so that we can't get out there, we can't talk to the people, we can't start to get the stakeholders moving in the direction they want to. It's no wonder we have to time-allocate everything in this House. We have a good bill like this that we have had stakeholders involved in, and still they need more time in here. They don't want to hear what stakeholders have to say.

2110
Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell): First I want to commend the member for Windsor-Walkerville. He has always got a very interesting speech to deliver.

Changes are needed, that is definite, but I am worried at times when this government comes up with some changes, because with the changes that occur with this government, most of the time they haven't done any analysis before they implement some changes, and we could see at times the problems that we are going through. But definitely we need change. During last January's ice storm in eastern Ontario, most of the eastern Ontario were left in the dark for at least 23 days. Hydro had completely forgotten to have a plan in place. They had no communications plan in place. But all the time I can say the hydro linesmen did a super job in trying to restore the situation.

Yes, we need some changes. During the ice storm we could have gotten the Chaudière Falls in Ottawa to generate some power for eastern Ontario. We could have had the plant that was built by a doctor in Casselman on the South Nation River, but Ontario Hydro doesn't permit a private firm to develop power at the present time. Definitely by the year 2000 what is going to be expected from this government? Will they implement an increase to try to compensate all the losses they have gone through during the ice storm? At the present time there is no guarantee that by the year 2000 there won't be any increase to the consumers of Ontario.

Mr Pouliot: I wish to thank the member for Windsor-Walkerville, in my opinion one of the best orators, one of the most articulate members of this Legislature. Thank you for reminding the government that the debt might go — this is the chairman of the board saying that, it's not one of us — from \$32 billion to \$47 billion. That's inclusive of fixing the mess of the nuclear plants.

If this is true, and there's no reason to believe that it might not be accurate, the Ontario debt under this government will have nearly doubled. That's the reality today. The debt of Ontario Hydro under this government will have nearly doubled.

When we ask questions about the environment they close their eyes, like they do so often when we talk about the environment. Today's newspaper, big, bold lettering, "Polluter Fines Drop Under Tories: Report." That's the largest-circulating daily in Canada, the Toronto Star. They say, "The environment ministry's budget was cut by 81% and its staff slashed to 1,494... from 2,208." Simply put, you have these new players coming on, well-intentioned but in some cases without the expertise of Ontario Hydro. They don't have the staff. They have turned their backs on the environment. They have cut the budget by 81%.

When that dirty Ohio coal comes to feed, what's going to happen to the monitoring of compliance? That's what the member for Windsor-Walkerville wants to know. He wants to make sure that the legacy of electricity will not be hazardous to one's health.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Windsor-Walkerville has two minutes to respond.

Mr Duncan: I want to thank the members for Hamilton Centre, Lake Nipigon, Huron and Prescott-Russell for their comments.

One other point I wanted to raise as I conclude my

opportunity to participate in this debate, and that again is to quote Ontario Hydro chair Bill Farlinger who, as the government members well know, is a government appointee, a supporter of the government, a friend of the government, someone who has been called upon by the government, and he said that lower prices were a "leap of faith" as a result of this bill. I believe the government at the end of the day wants to ensure that we will have lower and competitive energy prices in this province and I believe Mr Farlinger wants to ensure that.

I would hope that as we embark on further discussions with the public, we will look at those questions: questions of debt, questions of pricing, the questions of equitably sharing, the changes that are coming about. I would hope that we'll have an opportunity to meaningfully review those particular issues. It would be a shame at this point if we couldn't.

This bill, in my view, is an important, major piece of

legislation from an economic development perspective. Again, we all talk about the coming new millennium and what we have to be ready for. A re-energized energy market in this province whose aim and goal is to provide lower, more cost-effective energy is in everyone's best interests, and to the extent that we can find workable solutions to the question about stranded debt, how we decommission or recommitment our nuclear assets and how we share both the cost and the benefits associated with that, that will be a telling point about the future of the energy market in this province.

I hope that the government recognizes those issues and even their own supporters in this process recognize that this path is fraught with much challenge and danger.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Christopher: I appreciate the opportunity to

join in the debate.

Let me first comment on the response of the member for Huron, who said first of all, "The people" — I believe I'm quoting, but certainly it's close — "trust this government," and then I don't know what she said after that because any sentence that starts with that is not going to get too far with the public. The public does not trust this government. That doesn't mean that some of them won't necessarily still vote for you. I accept that you're going to get some votes out there, but I'm very confident that it won't be based on the fact that anybody trusts you, unless it's those who have already done very well by you, thank you very much, and they will have trust that a second majority government for you would mean even more for them.

She also said, "We want to get out there and talk to the people." That's rich. That is so rich coming from a government that just finished shutting down democracy on the whole issue of election finances and they shut down the whole democratic process on the issue of their new labour legislation. How rich to suggest under any other piece of legislation that they're anxious to go out and talk to the people. What a load. Give me a break.

I also want to reference the comments of my colleague Wayne Lessard from Windsor-Riverside. He of course is our critic on this issue. He said in his opening speech on our behalf that if you like what Mike Harris did for health and education, you'll love what he's going to do for Hydro. I think that's important to keep in mind when we're asked to keep the "leap of faith" that Mr Farlinger talks about.

It seems to me the last time we heard a reference to "leap of faith" was that great, progressive social issue called free trade, where we lost literally hundreds of thousands of jobs in Ontario. All that was under a leap of faith from a government that at every turn has hurt the most vulnerable, has hurt the people who can least afford to be hurt, and they're the ones to whom the government says, "We want you to trust us, and please join with us in a leap of faith." Every time anybody links arms from sort of the working world, the middle-class world, with Mike Harris Tories, when you take that leap off the cliff, the only ones who seem to have parachutes are Mike Harris and his cronies. Everybody else, when they hit that leap of

2120

Let me also comment on something the minister said in his opening remarks. He's quoted in Hansard as saying, "How large is the stranded debt?" is a very good question. "Then he goes on to say in the same paragraph, "We will have a full ailing." This is scary, when part of what we're supposed to rely on is a fair process, after you've given yourselves all the authority you want under Bill 35. The one thing you're asking people to rely on is that there will be a "full ailing." I can remember hearing that on WCB changes. I can remember your response just that other day when we were talking about the Election Finances Act and its changes, under the new labour legislation that's going to do so much damage in the construction industry and elsewhere. It really is galling to have any of your ministers stand up and say in response to legitimate concerns raised, "Don't worry, part of our process will be a full ailing," because in terms of Bill 36 and Bill 31 all that has meant is a full ailing in your caucus room and nowhere else in this province. So the words of the minister are not that comforting.

Many of my colleagues have talked about the fact that we, like the other parties, are in favour of competition and see in this the possibility for improvement in the future. I want to go back and pick up on what the member for Lanark-Renfrew said when he talked about the history of Hydro and about Hamilton and Stelco. Make no mistake: Every Hamiltonian realizes that part of the reason the steel industry focused in Hamilton on the way it did was because of access to and the availability of relatively cheap hydro-electric power, combined with our beautiful natural harbour and the then new rail lines that linked us with all the other major developing areas of the country as well as to the sources of raw material; in addition, I would quickly and proudly add, it was because we had a very strong, skilled, reliable workforce.

In the context of this debate, Hamiltonians understand fully the importance of hydro and of it being as inexpensive

ive as it can be, recognizing that when we're talking about subsidies and when we're talking about debt like this, it's usually the average middle-class taxpayer who gets it in the neck.

We're very concerned, and you've heard the issues

raised here — they're not going to go away — around the issue of the stranded debt. This is a matter of significant importance, I would argue one of maybe two or three of the most important issues facing the future of Hydro, and I want to reiterate, a lot of leap of faith around here that you haven't earned and trust that you haven't earned. It would be a lot better for the public if you had more answers to these questions around the stranded debt before you moved on the legislation, rather than saying, "Don't worry, we'll do the fair and proper thing afterwards."

We've got too much of your track record to look at when we consider where you might go in the future. A couple of other quick points. I want to mention the Hamiltonians. Today there was another damning report about the backing away of your government in the Ministry of the Environment; report after report coming forward, credible reports. Organizations with a great deal of respect have come forward and consistently pointed to the same problems in terms of the environment. You know that your red-tape cutting in large part has meant deregulation of enforcement of proper and decent environmental standards, that in finding the \$5 billion to pay for your tax cut, the Ministry of the Environment was one of your favourite targets, because it's something that quite

often got in the way of your friends in terms of what they

wanted to do. You've slashed away at the budget and you've hacked away at the staff to the point where we finally had a major disaster in Hamilton with the Plastimet fire. You don't even have the guts or the decency to call a public inquiry, and I'm convinced now it's because of your concern over what will come tumbling out about what you did in that ministry that might have prevented the Plastimet fire had you not done that.

When you talk about, "Don't worry, we'll take care of the environment," we have some very serious concerns. I think that in large part, when the environmental groups are supportive of this, they're looking at competitiveness and alternative sources of energy. There hasn't been a whole lot of talk here about that, but a lot of them are looking for government initiatives that will support research and implementation of new research into solar power, wind power, and other sources of renewable energy that could compete with the traditional forms, not just competition between all your friends.

These are very serious issues that obviously I can't deal with in the 10 minutes the Tories' new rules have left us answers to that here, then I think you can expect we're going to continue to oppose your ramming anything through that has the significance of Hydro in this province. **The Acting Speaker:** It being almost 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow. *The House adjourned at 2128.*

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon Hillary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Algora	Wildman, Bud (ND)	Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Algoma-Maitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Larkin, Frances (ND)	Guelp	Elliot, Brenda (PC)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Haltom Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC)	Haltom North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Hamilton East / -Est	Christopherson, David (ND)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Pettit, Trevor (PC)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Hamilton Mount	Ross, Lillian (PC)
Burlington South / -Sud	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC)	Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)
	Issues / ministre sans portefeuille	High Park-Swansca	Shea, Deryn (PC)
	Minister without Portfolio (Seniors)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Cambridge	Martinuk, Gerry (PC)	Kenora	Michash, Frank (L)
Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.	Kingston and The Islands /	Gettelsen, John (L)
	(PC) Minister of the Environment,	Kingston et Les Iles	Weillauer, Wayne (PC)
	government House leader / ministre de	Kitchener	Leadson, Gary L. (PC)
	l'Environnement, leader parlementaire	Kitchener-Willmot	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Lambton	Baubien, Marcel (PC)
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	Lanark-Kentrev	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Cornwall	Cleary, John C. (L)	Lincoln	Shcehan, Frank (PC)
Don Mills	Johnson, Hon / L'hon David (PC)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
	Minister of Education and Training /	London North / -Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne
	ministre de l'Education et de la		(PC) Minister of Intergovernmental
Dovercourt	Formation		Affaire, ministre responsible for
	Silipo, Tony (ND)		women's issues / ministre des Affaires
Dowview	Castroli, Annamaria (L)		intergouvernementales, ministre
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	London South / -Sud	Wood, Bob (PC)
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.
	and Minister of Correctional Services /		(PC) Minister of Consumer and
	ministre du Travail, solliciteur general		Commercial Relations / ministre de la
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)		Consommation et du Commerce
Durham West / -Ouest	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC)	Middlesex	Smith, Bruce (PC)
	Minister of Community and Social	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
	Services / ministre des Services sociaux	Mississauga North / -Nord	Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC)
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Hon / L'hon Margaret
	English		(PC) Minister without Portfolio
	Elgin		(Children's Issues) / ministre sans
Esssex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC)
Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)		Minister without Portfolio
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		(Privatization) / ministre sans
Etobicoke-West / -Ouest	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)		portefeuille (privatisation)
Fort William	McLeod, Lynn (L)	Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)
	Speaker / President	Napan	Baird, John R. (PC)
	Hastings, John (PC)	Muskoka-Bate-Georgienne	Grimmett, Bill (PC)

Constituency	Member/Party	Constituency	Member/Party
Circumscription	Député(e) / Parti	Circumscription	Député(e) / Parti

Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Sarnia	Boushy, Dave (PC)
Nipissing	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC)	Sault Ste Marie /	Martin, Tony (ND)
Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif		Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Barrett, Toby (PC)		Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)
Gall, Doug (PC)		Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
Colle, Mike (L)		Scarborough-Eglarville	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)
Carr, Gary (PC)		Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Caplan, David (L)		Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)		Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Patten, Richard (L)		Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Grandmaître, Bernard (L)		Simcoe West / -Ouest	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)
Guzzo, Gary J. (PC)		Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Opposition / chef de l'opposition		Sudbury	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Cullen, Alex (L)		Sudbury East / -Est	Ramsay, David (L)
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)		Timiskaming	
Ruprecht, Tony (L)		Victoria-Haliburton	
Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC)		Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	
Johnson, Bert (PC)		Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	
Gravelle, Michael (L)		Welland-Thorold	Kornos, Peter (ND)
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Wentworth East / -Est		Doyle, Ed (PC)	
Wentworth North / -Nord		Skarica, Toni (PC)	
Willowdale		Harris, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC)	
Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre des Affaires autochtones		Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Windsor-Riverside		Lessard, Wayne (ND)	
Windsor-Sandwich		Pupailio, Sandra (L)	
Duncan, Dwight (L)		Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC)	
Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme		Parker, John L. (PC)	
Turbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC)		Minister without Portfolio / ministre sans portefeuille	Klees, Frank (PC)
York-Mackenzie		Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
York South / -Sud		Kennedy, Gerard (L)	
Nickel Belt		Vacant	

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comportant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premiers et derniers numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Monday 22 June 1998

CONTENTS

SECOND READINGS

Energy Competition Act, 1998,

Bill 35, Mr Wilson

Mr Rupprecht.....1719, 1721
Mrs Johns.....1720, 1725, 1729
1733, 1736, 1739
Mr Michalsch.....1720, 1724, 1729
1731, 1737

Mr Lessard.....1721
Mr Carroll.....1721
Mr Marchese.....1722, 1725, 1731
Mr Gilchrist.....1724, 1734
Mr Pouliot.....1725, 1732, 1734
1736, 1739

Mr Jordan.....1726, 1729
Mr O'Toole.....1727, 1731
Mr Ramsay.....1728, 1729, 1732
Mr Christopherson.....1728, 1731
1734, 1738, 1740

Mr Bartolucci.....1733
Mr Rollins.....1734, 1737
Mr Conway.....1736
Mr Duncan.....1737, 1739
Mr Lalonde.....1739
Debate deemed adjourned.....1741

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 22 juin 1998

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

*Loi de 1998 sur la concurrence
dans le secteur de l'énergie,
projet de loi 35, M. Wilson*
Débat présumé ajourné.....1741



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Deuxième session, 36^e législature

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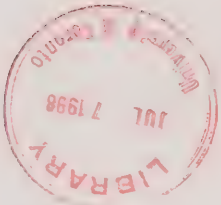
Mardi 23 juin 1998

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers



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ASSEMBLÉE LEGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 23 juin 1998

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 23 June 1998

*The House met at 1:30.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FÊTE DE LA SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE

M. Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa-Est) : Demain sera la Saint-Jean-Baptiste et je serai ailleurs dans la province pour fêter ce jour cher à tous les Canadiens et Canadiennes de Whitehorse jusqu'à Saint-Jean, Terre-Neuve. Je m'en serais voulu de ne pas souligner, comme je le fais à toutes les années, une fête qui a de l'importance pour tous les Canadiens et Canadiennes qui aiment leur pays. Je sais que c'est surtout le temps de célébrer, mais je m'en voudrais de ne pas lancer un message tout spécial au ministre délégué aux Affaires franco-

Beaucoup d'entre nous sommes conscients que le transfert de services provinciaux aux municipalités peut très bien signifier la perte de plusieurs droits durement acquis depuis 20 ans. Nous n'avons pas les moyens de perdre les quelques services sociaux et de santé de première ligne dont nous jouissons. Nous n'avons pas non plus les moyens de perdre notre temps à nous battre pour sauver nos services pièce par pièce. Monsieur le ministre, nous n'avons pas de temps ou d'énergie à perdre. Pourquoi ne pas agir ? Pourquoi ne pas garantir aux francophones de l'Ontario qu'ils vont bénéficier des mêmes services ? Pourquoi ne pas inclure ces garanties dans la Loi sur les services en français ?

Le gouvernement conservateur essaie de se donner l'image d'un gouvernement moins dur qui écoute la population. Si c'est le cas, priez l'oreille à ce que vous demande la population francophone de l'Ontario et faites quelque chose de vrai pour elle au lieu de la prendre en otage comme vous l'avez fait pour le projet de loi 108.

ALGOMA ORE DIVISION, WAWA

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma) : I rise today to pay tribute to the men and women who have worked with Algoma Ore division in the iron ore mine operation in Wawa for over 55 years.

Wawa is famous for the wild goose statue, and those who know the community will know that the Algoma Ore division, AOD, has had a sintering operation there for many years, which ceases today. After about 60 years of

GOLDCORP STRIKE

Mr Frank Mielash (Kenora) : My statement is directed to the Minister of Labour. Today marks the second anniversary of Goldcorp's strike. As we are aware, this strike is the longest in the province's history. It has placed more than 180 workers on the street, and we have a

Youth for their commitment to young people.

House would join me in congratulating Youth Assisting by this organization and I am sure all members of this I have personal knowledge of the excellent work done or they can contact me if they would like some direction.

examining the feasibility of expanding into other parts of the province and invites interested MPPs to contact them, services in Toronto. Indeed, Youth Assisting Youth is now proactive, well-funded and recognized contributor to youth Youth has many sources of funding, and it remains a I want to stress to all members that Youth Assisting strong in every respect and its programs are not in jeopardy, as has been suggested in this House.

YOUTH ASSISTING YOUTH

Mr William Saunderson (Eglington) : I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak about an organization in my riding of Eglington. Youth Assisting Youth has a proven track record, with 22 years of experience in preventing crime and school dropouts.

YOUTH ASSISTING YOUTH

the most productive and profitable.

Algoma Ore division is the only underground iron ore mine in North America. It is one of the most efficient underground mines in the world. Algoma Ore division and the steelworkers who work there, if they were competing with other underground mines in Canada, would be one of the most productive and profitable.

Wawa is indebted to the commitment, skills, innovation and hard work of the employees of AOD over these many years. They've helped to build a vibrant community. They've provided many of the facilities the community has come to rely upon.

AOD will continue operating until this Friday. On Saturday, I will join the people of Wawa in celebrating the achievements of AOD and the Steelworkers in Wawa.

INTERNATIONAL PLOWING MATCH

Mr. Bill Vankoughnet (Frontenac-Addington): I would like to invite all members and their constituents to this year's International Plowing Match to be held in Frontenac-Addington. The 1998 International Plowing Match and Farm Machinery Show, to be held September 15 to 19, will be hosted in the municipality of South Frontenac, the hamlet of Sunbury, Storrington township, north of Kingston.

This event is one of the premier agricultural showcases in North America, attracting some of the best plowpersons from around the world, and is one of the largest machinery shows on the continent.

The 1998 theme, "Quality Living: A Partnership" represents the relationship between rural and urban residents and aptly represents all that eastern Ontario has to offer.

In Ontario, agriculture is our second-largest industry, surpassed only by the auto industry. Eastern Ontario is one of the province's best agricultural areas and boasts a wealth of historical and cultural sites that showcase our Loyalist heritage, as well as the best natural and scenic opportunity for us to promote this area that includes Kingston, Rideau Lakes, the Thousand Islands, Quinte, the Land O' Lakes and the highlands of Hastings.

The tireless work of the many volunteers ensuring that this year's match is the best ever is further proof that, just as during last winter's ice storm, we in eastern Ontario have a way of pulling together and supporting our communities at all times, good and bad.

I encourage everyone to attend the International Plowing Match.

1340

CABINET MEMBERS

Mr. Dwight Duncan (Windor-Walkerville): It was with great interest that we read this morning's news clippings about a potential cabinet shuffle, because it appears as though there are lots of changes going on over there. We read with great interest about who's coming and who's going and why they're going and where they're going, and moreover, who's being left out and who's not being looked after.

We read with great interest that still no decision has been made about the Solicitor General's role, even though we all know where that problem started, don't we? We see, even more interestingly, that Mr. Baird is going into cabinet as the environment minister. What happens to Mr. Sterling? What's going on? How many contested nominations? And what about all those poor, hardworking members who have been overlooked, who may in fact have contested nominations as well? Why aren't they being looked after? What's going on?

What about people like Jim Brown and Frank Klees and others, members who have done a yeoman's service for the government, not being considered in this cabinet shuffle? What about Steve Gilchrist? Overlooked again.

community trying to deal with the economic impact such a strike imposes on business, social agencies and the community in general.

The minister has done nothing for the Goldcorp workers. He has done nothing in the community that is affected by the strike. He has done nothing for them. As I pointed out to his predecessor, this strike is tearing the community apart while he and his government show little interest in it.

My constituents want to know what progress the minister has made, since taking office, to settle the strike, now in its 730th day. The minister and his government are not interested in settling this strike; they're more interested in taking away workers' rights through legislation such as Bill 31. They are more interested in doing this than they are in protecting the workers.

I call upon the minister to show some interest in this strike, rather than have his anti-union policies, which are encouraging Goldcorp to continue the strike. As the Premier refused to set up a meeting with the workers during his visit to the region, I again call upon this Minister of Labour, as I have his predecessor, to travel with me to Baltimore, not only to meet with the strikers but to meet with their families and their community.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): Residents across Niagara region are being hit hard by this government's downloading on to them. This government is hitting them right in the pocketbook, whacking them hard with property tax increases and new user fees.

Let me tell you what the regional municipality of Niagara has been forced to do. Ms. Zimmermann, who's our regional chair, said: "The budget process has been a long and difficult one; downloading has hit regional services much more significantly than at the municipal level." She points out that they've got a responsibility, as the regional council, to educate and inform their ratepayers; in other words, to let them know exactly what those new property taxes are and why they're there. It's because this provincial government doesn't care about the welfare of people in Niagara and, quite frankly, residents across this province.

It has downloaded, resulting in massive increases in property taxes and other user fees. I tell you, it's going to hit the lowest incomes the worst. That includes seniors, that includes the increasing number of lower and lower paid workers. It means a high level of unemployed people, because in Niagara unemployment is still among the highest in this province, notwithstanding, but as a direct result of, three years of the Mike Harris Tory reign.

The information ads that are being published are going to make it clear to Niagara residents that there's one person and one person only to blame for their new property taxes, and that's Mike Harris and his henchpeople here at Queen's Park.

We see with interest what's going on. How could they overlook that? What is happening over there? What about all those other members who have contested nominations? We would have thought the government leader would have wanted to ensure the re-election of all of them.

What about our beloved Speaker? What's going to happen to him in all this?

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

Mrs Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): I rise today on a very serious issue with respect to children's aid societies and how they're being starved in this province. Right now, children's aid workers who are members of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union are holding information pickets to protest the ongoing starvation of children's aid societies. Ontario's children's aid workers protect all of our children, all types of abuses that are going on, and they are there on the front lines, in the home or elsewhere.

The problem is that they can't do it any more. They can't protect Ontario's children. Ontario's abused children need our help. Across Ontario, child abuse complaints are not being investigated quickly enough. Children's aid staff live in fear that a child will die because a case could not be opened in time. The stress is unbearable for many children's aid workers. Burnout is high and stress leave is routine.

There is much that we can do, joining with people in Ontario. I have the first two boxes of thousands and thousands of cards that are being sent to the Premier. There are about 5,000 here and there are more on the way. These are ordinary Ontarians demanding that this government put children first; that you stop the starvation of children's aid societies; that you put the resources in place to hire enough front-line workers to do the job of protecting Ontario's children.

SECONDARY SCHOOL SENIOR BAND SAUGEEN DISTRICT

Mrs Barbara Fisher (Bruce): It gives me great pleasure to share with my colleagues an outstanding accomplishment by a group of young people from the town of Port Elgin. I refer to the Saugeen District Secondary School senior band. This 61-member, extracurricular concert band, led by music teacher Wayne McGrath, competed in the Ovation Music Festival in Boston, Massachusetts, in April this year.

The band won gold in its class and gold overall at the festival and was ranked in the top 20% in North America. The band was also voted grand champions of the festival. The top soloist award was won by Kelly Irvine for flute and piccolo. Further, after all of the 30 adjudicated festivals were completed, the Saugeen District Secondary School senior band achieved top marks and placed first in North America.

This extraordinary accomplishment demonstrates the dedication and talent of our young people. Band members

ORAL QUESTIONS

UPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Solicitor General. We heard today about a concern of information regarding Ipperwash not being kept for future use. This is a serious matter. The Solicitor General must have known it was a serious matter shortly after the shooting. Can the Solicitor General assure the public that you have secured all the files regarding Ipperwash and that nothing has been destroyed since the shooting took place on September 6, 1995?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour, Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): There has been an interim order by the Information and Privacy Commissioner directed to the ministry and a response is being prepared, including the affidavit that the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner has requested. That response from the ministry will be provided within the time limits expressly stated by the privacy commissioner. That response will be forthcoming in this ongoing process between the ministry and the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Mr Phillips: What I'm searching for and would like from you, as the minister, the Solicitor General, the individual primarily responsible for law enforcement in this province, is your personal assurance that you have now looked into the situation in your office, that you have reviewed with your civil servants, with our public service in your area, what has taken place with the files. Can you assure the Ontario public that nothing, no information that is central to Ipperwash, the shooting of Dudley George and the criminal investigation of the OPP, has been destroyed or gotten rid of in your office?

Hon Mr Flaherty: The present information request arises out of a request made in April 1997 to which a response was made in May 1997. The result of that is that the Information and Privacy Commissioner has reviewed the material and has expressed the view that a further response is required, and the deputy minister certainly has assured me that he will be responding as directed by the Information and Privacy Commissioner. That is her job.

she's performing her function pursuant to her legislative responsibilities and we're responding accordingly.

Mr Phillips: Nothing could be more important around the whole Ipperwash episode than the preservation of essential information in the Solicitor General's office. We know that the OPP had serious concerns about the direction that the government took on Ipperwash. We know that the OPP expressed concerns about the way the cabinet was proceeding with the injunction. We know there were serious concerns about the direction that was going on at Ipperwash.

What the public have a right to know from you, the Solicitor General, the minister responsible for law enforcement in Ontario — can you today give us your assurance that you have reviewed with your staff what they have done with all of the files since that shooting on September 6 and can you assure the public that nothing has been destroyed or gotten rid of that is pertinent to the Ipperwash affair?

Hon Mr Flaherty: I can assure the honourable member that I have been assured by the deputy minister that, in all of his inquiries and his searches to date, he has found no evidence that any pertinent records have been destroyed. Further, all reasonable efforts have been made from the Office of the Information and Privacy Commission, which is entirely the appropriate course of conduct to be taken by the ministry.

The deputy minister has also indicated to me that the ministry has gone so far as to search the electronic mail backup system and no responsive records could be found. The deputy minister himself has assured me that the interim order from the Privacy Commissioner will be responded to as soon as possible.

1350

RESPTTE CARE

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I have a question for the Minister of Health. Minister, I want to talk to you today about home care and in particular about respite care.

I have a particular case to bring to your attention. This involves 60-year-old George Kennedy of Sudbury who has been caring for his 59-year-old wife, Silvia, since 1988. Silvia is a former school teacher. She was diagnosed with a brain tumour in 1988 and underwent radiation treatment. She has been on disability since then. In 1992, she was operated on because of a brain aneurysm. She can't walk, she can't talk, she's tube fed 12 hours a day, she takes medication 19 times a day and she needs round-the-clock care.

Her husband, George, quit his job in 1994 to look after his wife. He currently receives 37 hours per week of home care and some homemaking services but he was just recently denied access to any respite care. Do you know what he did get, though? He was looking for a nurse or a nursing assistant; what he got was a pamphlet costing \$1.3 million, telling him that everything was fine in

Ontario in so far as health care was concerned. What's your answer to him about respite care?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): One of the reasons we have been restructuring health services in Ontario is so that we can ensure that we are responding to the needs of the population.

One of the points I think I need to make is the fact that we have in this province a rapidly aging population. In fact, between the years 1996 to 2006, we're going to see an increase of 35% in those over the age of 75. So one of the areas where we have seen it necessary to make investments is in the area of community services. That, of course, provides support to people within their homes. People throughout this province, no matter where they live, will have increased access to services within their own homes as a result of the new investment we will make over the next eight years.

Mr McGuinty: This minister is exceptionally good at talking the talk when it comes to health care in the province. She is very good at making the promises.

This is a man who has worked hard all of his life and paid his taxes. He quit his job to look after his sick wife. All he is looking for from you is a little bit of help to give him a break. His doctor has told him that if he doesn't get somewhere between eight and 12 hours every week of respite care so he can get the hell out of the house, he's going to get sick. All he's asking for is a bit of a break from you. All he's had to date, by means of contact, is a pamphlet costing \$1.3 million. He's asking for help that's valued at \$200 a week.

I am asking a simple question: Why is it we can afford to pay for a pamphlet costing \$1.3 million and ship it around the province but we can't help out George and Silvia Kennedy, costing \$200 a week?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Our government's plan for health is in response to the needs of people. I would say to the Leader of the Opposition, despite the fact that the federal government has cut health care transfers by \$2 billion since 1993, our government has not only absorbed the \$2 billion that was lost in transfer payments but in spending \$1.2 billion more than we had said we were going to spend. We recognize, as the Leader of the Opposition has just indicated, that there are people in this province who have needs and we are endeavouring to respond to those needs. That's why we're making the changes to health care. That's why we're introducing the \$1.2 billion in long-term-care services. That will go to facilities and also community —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: Listen to what Mr Kennedy's doctor has told us. The doctor has told us that Mr Kennedy hasn't been out of the house for years. He hasn't been to a dentist in years. He hasn't even been able to get out of the house to go to physio for his back. He's got a problem with his back and his knee and his groin because every day he's got to spend time lifting and caring for his wife.

My question, once again, is very simple: Why is it that in Ontario today, the Mike Harris Ontario, we can afford

to spend \$1.3 million on propaganda but we can't afford to come up with \$200 a week to help Mr Kennedy and his wife? Do you know how much respect care \$1.3 million would get us? It would get us 125 years of respect care for Mr Kennedy. Or another way to put it: It would get one year of respect care for 125 families like the Kennedys today in Ontario who are going without some basic help. Why is it that, according to your priorities, we can pay for this propaganda but we can't help people who need the help?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Our government, with the changes we are making, is helping people in this province. In fact we have 43 community care access centres in this province. The community care access centres, as you know, are set up in such a way that there are local boards that make decisions.

The funding to the Sudbury CCAC has actually increased 50.5% since 1991-92. The funding to the Sudbury CCAC in 1996-97 was \$16.7 million. The funding to the Sudbury CCAC in 1997-98 is going to be increased to \$20 million. You can see that we continue to respond to the needs of people in these communities across Ontario, and in Sudbury there's going to be an increase of \$3.3 million.

1400

IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Solicitor General. For almost two years now we have been asking questions of your government concerning the death of Dudley George, an unarmed man who was taking part in a non-violent protest. We've asked for a public inquiry so that the facts could emerge. We've asked repeatedly in this Legislature for information and your government continues to provide no information. Frankly, you continue to stonewall.

This latest revelation is perhaps most troubling of all. Here we have an OPP officer who signs a sworn affidavit, who says that when he worked for the Deputy Solicitor General of your government during the time of the Ipperwash incident he left behind all of his records, all of his memoranda, all of his notes, yet your government now says those notes don't exist. What happened to those notes, Minister? What happened to those records?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour, Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): In response to the leader of the third party, as I mentioned earlier in response to the question from the Liberal Party, the deputy minister has assured me that in all of his inquiries and searches to date he has found no evidence that any pertinent records have been destroyed, and further, that all reasonable efforts have been made and will continue to be made to respond to the request.

The status is that the Information and Privacy Commission, as is her job and her statutory duty, has indicated that she is not satisfied, and with respect to the response she had received previously she has made an interim order

and the ministry will be responding within the time limit set out by the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Mr Hampton: The minister's answer gives away the problem here. Minister, it is not for you or the whiz kids in the Premier's office to decide what is pertinent in the investigation of the death of Dudley George. That responsibility rests with the privacy commissioner. For you to say, "Well, we'll decide what's pertinent, we'll decide what documents are pertinent for public scrutiny and for public information," shows how little you understand the privacy law and how much your government is prepared, I say quite frankly, to abuse that privacy law.

It is unprecedented that somebody who worked in the deputy minister's office would swear an affidavit saying, "All these records exist; I left them in the care and control of the government," and now your government says, "We can't find any of the records," records that pertain to the wrongful death of an unarmed man — and your government says, "We can't find any of the records."

The deputy minister has been asked to swear an affidavit. I'm asking you, will you do everything in your power to find those records?

Hon Mr Flaherty: As the leader of the third party knows, there is a process that has been established through the legislation governing the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. It applies to all the various ministries in the government. It also applies to the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services.

The information commissioner has indicated that she requires an affidavit from the deputy minister, and the deputy minister has confirmed to me that he will provide a sworn affidavit that will address all the matters raised in the interim order which we have received from the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The process is being followed. The directions of the Information and Privacy Commissioner are being followed according to the law in Ontario.

Mr Hampton: The only process that is being followed here is a process by the government of stalling, of trying to put this off. This request to the Information and Privacy Commissioner went in over a year ago, and for a year you have done everything possible to avoid providing this information. The privacy commissioner is having to head off the same frustration that we're dealing with.

We wanted some of these questions answered by a legislative committee, so we scheduled a mere 12 hours before the justice committee. What does your government do to head that off, to avoid having to answer these questions? You send a budget bill to the justice committee, a budget bill so you won't have to answer these questions about how an unarmed, innocent man was killed. Now we try to schedule it before another committee and you refuse to meet. You refuse every step of the way to answer these questions.

Minister, I asked you a moment ago, will you give a personal undertaking that you will do everything possible to find those records or explain what happened to them?

Hon Mr Flaherty: The member opposite talks about stalling. He should be aware of the facts, if he's not aware

of the facts, that the initial request to the Ministry of the Solicitor General in this particular matter to which he makes reference was April 15, 1997. The response was May 16, 1997, from the Information and Privacy Commissioner, was June 19, 1998. So there certainly has not been stalling on the part of the ministry. The ministry will respond within the time limit set out by the Information and Privacy Commissioner in her order, which was only forwarded June 19, 1998.

ONTARIO HYDRO

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My next question is for the Deputy Premier, and I would say yes, it's taken the privacy commissioner a while to chase this down, and the only reason is because you're not forthcoming with the records and the information.

Deputy Premier: I have a press release here. It is from Newcourt Credit Group, a company that specializes in providing capital financing for companies that want to get into the production of private electrical power, private electrical plants. This company has just announced that the chair of Hydro, the Premier's good friend Mr Bill Farlinger, is now not only the chair of Hydro but is also on the board of Newcourt Credit.

I understand Mr Farlinger's job at Hydro. He's supposed to be looking after all the people in this province who purchase power from Hydro. What I don't understand is what he's going to do for this private company. Can you tell me, Deputy Premier, whose interest is Mr Farlinger going to look after here, the public at Hydro or the private —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you. Deputy Premier.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): I do not know of the press release or the contents therein. I'd be more than happy to look into the matter for you and get back to you about it. I would presume, though, that if Mr Farlinger or anybody else who was appointed to any board had a conflict or even a perceived conflict in any manner, they would declare it and not take part in any discussion related thereto.

Mr Hampton: Oh, the government that says, "We see no evil and we don't want to see anything." It's your job to protect the public interest here. It's your job to ensure that Mr Farlinger is serving all those ratepayers in Ontario who are purchasing hydro from Ontario Hydro.

The problem, as I see it, is this: You've announced that you've got a competition policy for Hydro. Newcourt is in the business of helping private firms set up power plants and get into the competitive business. Is Mr Farlinger working for Hydro here, is he working for all the hydro-electric purchasers of Ontario, or is Mr Farlinger working to help some of these private companies get into competition with Hydro? It seems to me he can't be doing both at the same time. If he is, it's a conflict of interest.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Leader of the third party, hold on. I'm having difficulty hearing you.

Mr Hampton: Let me get back to the point, and that is that Mr Farlinger himself said only two weeks ago that, given your government's plans for Hydro, the stranded debt could reach \$30 billion. In other words, the taxpayers of the province and the public that buys power from Hydro could be stuck picking up \$30 billion in stranded debt due to your policies. On the other side of things, the private power producers may stand to come in and literally cream the market.

My question is, who is Mr Farlinger serving here? Is he going to be looking after the taxpayers of this province, who could be stuck with some of that \$30-billion stranded debt, is he going to be looking after all the hydro ratepayers who may be stuck, or is he going to be looking after the private companies that can come in and cream the market? He is not a private citizen; he has public responsibilities here.

Hon Mr Eves: He is also subject to conflict-of-interest regulations and guidelines. I might point out to the leader of the third party some of the Hydro board appointees, who I presume had absolutely no conflict of interest, under the Bob Rae government: Michael Cassidy, former provincial NDP leader and federal MP; Kaeley Cummings, former national director of CUPB and executive of Ottawa Centre NDP; Elmer McVey, prominent Canadian Labour Congress member and NDP member; John Murphy, former CUPB vice-president and president of the Power Workers' Union. You don't think that's a conflict? You are on a one-way street, and it's one way to last place.

1410

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Minister of Health and it has to do with the tragic death of a constituent. The minister is familiar

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): My ques-

tion is to the minister responsible for children's issues. Today 1,500 children's aid workers, represented by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, have set up information pickets to tell the public about the ongoing crisis at children's aid societies. A recent workload survey found that their caseloads are 36% higher than the acceptable level established by the ministry.

CAS workers are suffering from burnout and stress, and as one Ottawa-Carleton intake social worker told his society: "All of us have files, five, six, seven or more, on our desks that we've been unable to get to. All of us worry that some tragedy will take place. All of us fear a child will be hurt or killed." That CAS has implemented a pilot project on the new risk assessment model. They find that it takes six more hours per case. That means that in Ottawa they would have to hire up to 95% more staff to reach the acceptable workload level.

Minister, I've said it before and I'll say it again: Not one child will be helped by the new tools unless the staff are there to implement them. Will you guarantee there are enough front-line workers to make kids safe in Ontario?

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [children's issues]): I appreciate the question from the member for Beaches-Woodbine. Our government has made the commitment that the children's aid societies in this province asked for. They asked for increased funding, they asked for universal assessment tools and they asked for a database that interlinked all of the children's aid societies around this province.

When we announced that \$170 million in funding, that was welcomed openly and actually on the record in many public venues by the children's aid societies, because they told us that with that funding they could meet the increased workload. We knew there would be increased workloads with the new assessment systems and the universal reporting through the database. As far as our government is concerned, our pledge to protect these children, the most vulnerable children in our society, is ongoing.

Ms Lankin: I don't know how to respond to that. The key demand that you missed was they asked for enough front-line workers to use the new tools so that kids would be safe. The key response to your funding announcement that you missed was that it was only enough to make up for past cuts and that you didn't guarantee the emergency funding wouldn't be rolled into that and that it wasn't enough to keep up with increased caseloads. How did you miss that, Minister? I don't understand.

Kids are at risk. Caseloads are going up. In Ottawa-Carleton in less than two years the caseload has gone from 739 to 960. In London it has gone up in the same period by 33%. John Liston, the executive director there, says he doesn't have adequate staff to protect those kids in that increased caseload.

Minister, how bad does it have to get before your government will take action? As minister responsible for children, will you do just two things: Will you step in and

with the case because I sent her two letters and some considerable background. Just to familiarize her, though, the woman was 35 years old, 30 weeks pregnant and entered the local hospital, a terrific hospital, Scarborough Grace. She then had a brain haemorrhage. Scarborough Grace notified an organization called CritCall, that was assigned to find her a neurosurgery bed. This was at 7:21 pm; it happened last September.

CritCall made 21 phone calls to four different hospitals, trying to get her a bed. They were unable to get her a neurosurgery bed here in Toronto. They phoned Scarborough Grace back at 9:38 and said they were unable to find her a bed. The closest bed was in Hamilton. They then phoned air ambulance, and air ambulance was unable to respond. She was then transported by land. Tragically, she passed away. The baby was saved.

I've been waiting now, as you know, Minister, for nine months for you to give me an answer regarding how this could happen. Can you inform the House now how this could happen in Ontario?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): I would be pleased to follow up and provide information for the member.

Mr Phillips: Minister, I sent you all the details. I personally phoned you but only talked to your executive assistant. I sent you another letter three weeks ago asking that you, on an urgent basis, look into this.

The reason I'm pursuing it is that, tragically, this woman is dead now, but I want to be sure that the ministry has taken steps so that this couldn't happen again. That really is my question. Here in Toronto, 21 calls to four hospitals and they knew it was critical, but they could not find a bed. The closest bed was Hamilton. I might add that even when she arrived in Hamilton they had to phone another hospital to get an obstetrics surgeon over to save the baby.

Knowing how serious this is, what steps has your ministry taken since this death to ensure that something like this could never happen again?

Hon Mrs Witmer: These situations are certainly very tragic. As you know, we have undertaken communications with the hospitals. Also, in response to some of the situations that had happened as a result of emergency overcrowding, we set up a task force with the Ontario Hospital Association, because we want to make sure that these types of situations don't happen again. This had been going on for some time. When the task force made its recommendations to the government and the Ontario Hospital Association, there were recommendations for the hospitals to follow through and also for the government. We responded to every one of the recommendations to ensure that — certainly we were prepared and the hospitals are doing their part to ensure that we can deal with these situations and take the appropriate steps necessary to prevent these types of situations in the future.

conduct, with the CASS and the workers, a caseload workload survey? And if you find, like I'm saying, that you need more workers, will you convince your government to fund the front-line workers to protect Ontario's children?

Hon Mrs Marland: I'm happy to assure this House that the \$170 million is going to front-line workers. That's what the children's aid societies asked us for.

In terms of the priority of this government on the protection of children, we have already reported on the reports that our government asked for. Incidentally, we asked for three reports on the welfare and the protection of children in this province. We are acting on the recommendations of those reports, which in turn will help the people who have the front-line responsibilities in the children's aid societies.

1420

ARTS AND CULTURE FUNDING

Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York): I have a question for the honourable Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. I was pleased to hear the government's announcement yesterday of a commercial theatre development fund. My riding of Durham-York is home to a vibrant commercial theatre community, including the Red Barn Theatre, the oldest professional summer theatre in Canada. Can you tell me what this fund will mean for the small theatre groups in my riding and across the province?

Hon Isabel Bassett (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): I'm pleased to say that small and medium-sized commercial productions right across the province will be eligible for funding and consideration under the commercial theatre development fund pilot project. Any production or theatre that is outside of Toronto will be eligible for an additional \$10,000. That will be available to those productions.

If I could just add, to the member for Durham-York, I'll be attending the Red Barn season opener, the 50th anniversary, on the 30th. I wish you well with that.

Mrs Munro: Can you please tell me what the selection process is for this fund?

Hon Ms Bassett: I want to say that since the fund was created by the theatre community, it will be managed by the theatre community, the Toronto Theatre Alliance. They will be considering four applications next year as part of the pilot project.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr David Caplan (Orléans): My question is for the Minister of Education and Training. Last week, on June 15, you announced with great fanfare one-time, \$70-million funding for special education and lower class sizes across the province. However, I don't think you're really doing anyone a favour. I spoke with the Toronto District School Board finance department and they tell me there are no new dollars. What your plan is that for every dollar you transfer you will reduce —

The Speaker: Order. *Interjections.*

Hon David Johnson: I'll guarantee that for the first time in the history of the province, including Liberal and NDP governments, this government is focusing on the classroom and the students. We're putting more money in the classroom. We're insisting that —

The Speaker: Member for Durham East, you don't sit beside the member for Etobicoke-Humbug.

The Speaker: Member for Durham East, you don't sit beside the member for Etobicoke-Humbug.

The Speaker: Order. *Interjections.*

Mr Caplan: That is a very interesting answer. I'm going to give you another chance, but maybe this time you should consult your own funding formula before you answer. Let me refer you to page 35 of your revised technical paper dated June 18, 1998. It clearly states that for boards there are limits to the increases they can have, dollar for dollar, and that anything above will be reduced in their operating grants. I'll quote:

"The new funding formula will be phased in such that boards will not experience changes in revenue due to the funding model exceeding 4%. Where the change in revenue is 4% or more, a mitigation grant adjustment for the difference will be made to the board's grant allocation."

This is your policy — a complete and utter shell game. You're going to make some grand announcement to put more dollars into the schools but take them away from other places. Stand in your place today, Minister, and guarantee that there will be no reduction from any school board budget because of your announcement and because of this policy.

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): I will confirm in this House, exactly as we announced last week, that this government is going to ensure that the needs of the special education students across Ontario are met. To do that, we have put more money into the system such that the intensive support amounts which are required by individual students, through an audit process that I'll take place this fall, will be funded by the boards.

In our estimate, this will involve perhaps up to \$40 million of additional funding, new funding, more-than-has-been-announced funding in the past. But we're committed to this because we believe that the special education needs of the children which were served in the past must be served and met in the future.

Mr Caplan: That is a very interesting answer. I'm going to give you another chance, but maybe this time you should consult your own funding formula before you answer. Let me refer you to page 35 of your revised technical paper dated June 18, 1998. It clearly states that for boards there are limits to the increases they can have, dollar for dollar, and that anything above will be reduced in their operating grants. I'll quote:

The Speaker: Order. *Interjections.*

Mr Caplan: I can understand that the members opposite don't want their masks to be revealed. I can understand that they don't want the public to know that for every dollar you transfer to the Toronto District School Board, your plan is to remove, through other places in the funding formula, dollar for dollar the exact same amount. Confirmed this with me. Will you confirm to this House that this is your policy?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): I will confirm in this House, exactly as we announced last week, that this government is going to ensure that the needs of the special education students across Ontario are met. To do that, we have put more money into the system such that the intensive support amounts which are required by individual students, through an audit process that I'll take place this fall, will be funded by the boards.

of the special education students, as no government before

has met the needs of students.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon David Johnson: I don't know why the opposition

parties find this problematic. We're going to ensure that

every board has more money in the classroom. We're

going to ensure that every board has money to meet the

needs of the special education student. The announcement

of last week will involve about \$40 million extra to meet

the needs of the special education students across Ontario.

I think that is good news.

1430

NATIVE HOUSING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): My question is

to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation.

Yesterday I met with representatives of the Frontiers

Foundation — in fact, they're here today — Dr Charles

Catto, Marco Guzman and Tony Lew.

Since 1964 Frontiers has built and renovated over

3,000 homes for aboriginal families. These are families

living in substandard and often unsafe housing; people

with little electricity, water or sanitation. The problem is

that the federal government has cut their funding and now

you have done the same. This cut means that 37 families

that were scheduled for renovation or rebuilding are going

to continue to live in unsafe housing.

Minister, in January your office contacted Frontiers and

said you were willing to look at this again. But since then

they have not been able to get a meeting with you. An-

other construction season will be completed unless you do

something today. Minister, are you going to help them?

Hon Isabel Bassett (Minister of Citizenship,

Culture and Recreation): First of all, I must give my

condolences to Charles Catto on the death of his father. I

also want to say of course I have been in touch with him.

My ministry has looked at some of the very valuable work

he has done and we are trying to consider ways that we

can help him, I think, to repay a considerable loan that

may not exactly fit under the mandate we have right now.

We are not in the position in the ministry to hand out

grants. They have to be considered in a careful way, and

Charles Catto knows that very clearly. We have been

working with him and now the ball is in his court to come

back with a viable means whereby he can meet our cri-

Mr Marchese: Money has been flowing from your

ministry to them for years. You just cut it. They have been

living in these types of housing conditions. You can see it;

it's a big picture. All they want is to live with some dig-

nity, some very basic things. We're talking about warmth,

shelter and safety.

Minister, I want to share with you some of the suc-

cesses they have had, and you're aware of them. Last year

Mr E.B. Eddy, as you know, donated all the lumber. The

house was built by volunteer labour and a new fridge and

CHILDREN'S NUTRITION

Mr Wayne Wetlaufer (Kitchenor): My question is

for the minister responsible for children. Recently there

have been a number of articles in the media discussing

children's readiness to learn. Essentially studies are now

proving that children who go to school healthy and well-

nourished have a greater capacity to learn. Children who

have empty stomachs can't learn. They can't concentrate

on their school work. They don't have the capacity to

retain information.

Minister, we are focusing on building the best educa-

tion system possible but we have to make sure that our

children are able to benefit from their daily lessons. Our

government has a commitment to fund the Breakfast for

Learning program, but is this alone going to help our

children get off to a healthy start?

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio

[children's issues]): I'd like to thank the member for

Kitchenor for his question. In 1996, as he knows, our

Premier made a series of very important announcements

that affect the lives of children. He recognized that early

intervention and prevention are what get children off to

their best start.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order. It's

okay, Minister.

Hon Mrs Marland: This could include help for fam-

ilies on the birth of a child or help with speech and lan-

guage programs for them before the child begins school. It

also includes help for families with school-age children

who frankly aren't able to provide a healthy breakfast for

those children before they start school and leave for school

each morning.

We've created a variety of programs to meet the needs

of individual children in Ontario and to ensure that chil-

dren can get the most out of their future. I am actually

very proud of what our government has done to help these

children get out new programs.

Mr Wetlaufer: Families face a vast number of chal-

lenges in their upbringing of children. We know that. We

also know that the government is truly committed to help-

ing children get off on the right foot.

The Speaker: Member for Welland-Thorold, you've

got to maintain your place. Thank you.

Mr Wellbauer: I want to ask you specifically, how-

ever, about the breakfast programs. As you stated, it was

in 1996 that the Premier announced the formation of a

partnership between the government and the Canadian

Living Foundation. Since that time we have seen child

nutrition programs all over the province, and I know that

they are of benefit to a vast number of children.

I also remember that a few months ago there was some

concern raised that these programs were in financial diffi-

culty. When the interests of the children are paramount,

what has been done to help families and communities feed

their children?

Hon Mrs Marland: You will remember that when we

were in opposition as a party, the priority of children and

the breakfast program had been a priority of this Premier

since he became leader in 1990. I am delighted to say that,

as promised, now the government will continue the child

nutrition partnership with the Canadian Living

Foundation.

In fact, last Tuesday we announced an additional

\$2.5 million for the program that has already served

56,000 children in 714 child nutrition programs. We have

partnered with the foundation and with local communities

to help ensure that children are well fed and have the

ability to concentrate on the lessons before them when

they get to school.

This government feels that it is critical for children to

be able to learn and grow to their full potential. This is

just one way that we're helping children in this province

today.

1440

GO TRANSIT

Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence): My question is to

the Minister of Transportation. It's obvious to everyone

that your government has given up on GO Transit. Missis-

sauga and Toronto are about to experience a huge loss in

sibility for the cuts in service. You have refused, your

Crombie commission, which told you not to dump the cost

of GO Transit on to municipalities.

Now you're refusing to listen to your caucus colleagues

and cabinet colleagues. The member for Mississauga

South, Margaret Marland, chastised the GO Transit board

The member for Scarborough West, Steve Gilchrist, has

been out collecting names for a petition to protest these

cuts. Why are you giving up on GO Transit and refusing

to listen to good advice from your own members?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Transportation):

This government is not giving up on GO Transit at all. We

with GO Transit well. We think we have found a way to

ensure —

interjections.

Hon Mr Clement: As a result of that \$2.5 billion

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Members,

interjections.

issues, so they can deliver those services better.

in tax room; \$2.5 billion to deal with local transit issues,

services, we have just given the municipalities \$2.5 billion

terms of the transfer of local services and provincial

member was referring to — that through our decisions in

with the funding through the gas tax that the honourable

both him and to those who passed the resolution dealing

I would say to the honourable member — perhaps to

thrives in the future.

municipalities to make sure that GO Transit succeeds and

this government is not giving up on GO Transit. In fact,

Hon Mr Clement: I can say again to this House that

greater Toronto area?

ability. Why are you giving up on GO Transit service in the

looking to you to rectify this problem. It's your responsi-

becoming fairly obvious that these municipalities are

of sense? After all, you have dumped the cost of GO Tran-

refusing to listen to that kind of request, which makes a lot

allocation for GO Transit. Again, I ask you, why are you

resolution formally requesting you to review the funding

and to fix this problem. The city of Toronto just passed a

Minister, it's obvious you have the power to intervene

with an answer like that.

luck in the coming cabinet shuffle. I'm sure he'll need it,

Mr Cordiano: I would like to wish the minister good

Ontario as well.

they've ever had before. I think that's a good thing for

giving those municipalities more of a direct say than

Minister Leach and this government are pursuing, we are

to have their say. In fact, as a result of the changes that

greater Toronto area, it allows each of the municipalities

representing all the municipalities in the region of the

Toronto area. Indeed, by virtue of the board that exists,

gral part of the interregional transit system in the greater

I want to assure this House that GO Transit is an inte-

humour in this situation.

Hon Mr Clement: I'm glad to see we can all see the

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is

for the Minister of Education and Training. A serious

problem has developed over the last several months at

Dunrankin Drive Public School in Mississauga. The prin-

cipal, Ms Claudette Neita, and now two teachers, have

made formal complaints to the Ontario Human Rights Commission about racial discrimination on the part of the board. Ms Neita is the second black woman ever to be appointed as a school principal in Mississauga. She maintains that the Peel board has failed to implement its own racial discrimination policy.

There used to be an anti-discrimination and equal opportunity branch in your ministry, except your government eliminated it. You said that work could be done elsewhere.

Minister, will you ensure that racism is shut out of Ontario's education system, for teachers as well as students? Will you ensure that the incidents that are talked about here don't happen?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): To my understanding, the incident referred to by the leader of the third party is under investigation or under a review process through the local school board and is being dealt with accordingly. I would say that I concur in the sentiment that there is no room for racism, discrimination or bias, not only within the education system but within government in general. Certainly I can give him my assurances that I personally do not tolerate racism, do not tolerate any forms of discrimination, and would take the appropriate actions to ensure that they don't happen.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Supplementary.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): We appreciate your sentiments but, as you know, to fight racism it requires more than just sentiments. As has been pointed out, Claudette Neita and at least two of her staff have been forced to go to the Ontario Human Rights Commission on this issue. The Peel board's answer so far has been to transfer Ms Neita to another school for next September. Some 85% of students and parents who are visible minorities at Dunrankin Drive school have petitioned the board to let Ms Neita stay at their school.

Your own ministry policy referendum number 119 on the development of school board anti-racism and ethno-cultural equity policies states, "The ministry will conduct cyclical audits of the policy implementation." Your government, eliminated that branch that would have been conducting those audits.

The question to you is, what are you doing about it? What is your ministry doing? Who in fact is doing those audits to make sure that school boards enforce their own racial discrimination policies? Given that the branch is gone, how are you doing that job?

Hon David Johnson: I would say once again that this is a matter that is being dealt with by the local board. This is a matter that is being dealt with by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. I think those are both appropriate bodies, given where the original situation developed, and I would not pretend to interfere in that particular process.

Within the Ministry of Education, we do not tolerate racial discrimination. I give my assurances to the member opposite that whatever is required to ensure that racial discrimination is not entertained or allowed to take place within the ministry, we'll take those steps and ensure that they are in place.

PEETIONS ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition which reads as follows:

"To the government of Ontario:

"Whereas the Conservative government of Mike Harris is trying increase the limit on the amount of money that political parties and individual candidates are allowed to contribute to corporations and individuals are allowed to contribute to political parties and individual candidates in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Harris government plans to introduce legislation to permit political parties and candidates to spend far more money during election campaigns; and

"Whereas the Conservative government of Mike Harris would like to remove certain campaign expenditures such as polling and campaign headquarters equipment from the spending limits placed on political parties and candidates;

and

"Whereas the Conservative government is proposing to abolish the Ontario election finances commission, the watchdog agency policing political contributions and expenditures;

"Whereas the Harris government wishes to shorten the length of provincial election campaigns and to permit expensive media advertising throughout the entire period, thereby favouring the political parties and candidates with the most money; and

"Whereas the changes to the Election Finances Act proposed by Mike Harris will give undue and unacceptable influence to the wealthiest and most powerful interests in our province and will result in the problems that have plagued the American political system, where money plays a central role;

The Speaker: On a point of order?

Interjections.

The Speaker: The opportunity exists at any time for a member to correct their own record, but it's not a point of order for you to ask a member — we could be here all day if members want to stand up and check to see if another member wants to correct their record.

Mr Curling: We are here all day.

The Speaker: We are here all day.

Mr Curling: We are here all day.

Petitions.

The Speaker: On a point of order?

Interjections.

The Speaker: The opportunity exists at any time for a member to correct their own record, but it's not a point of order for you to ask a member — we could be here all day if members want to stand up and check to see if another member wants to correct their record.

Mr Curling: I'm asking her if she would like to correct her record.

You may not correct another member's record.

The Speaker: Hold on, member for Scarborough North. Let me just be clear. You may correct your record. "Frontier College," when it's "Frontiers Foundation."

Mr Curling: The point of order is, I heard her saying "Frontier College," when it's "Frontiers Foundation."

The Speaker: Hold on. What is the point of order?

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): On a point of order, Mr Chairwoman: I'm just wondering whether the Minister of Citizenship would like to correct the record. I heard her mentioning that —

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to abandon his planned legislation which will permit substantial increases in the amount of money that can be contributed by corporations and individuals to political parties and candidates and the amount of money that political parties and candidates can spend on provincial elections."

I affix my signature as I'm in full agreement with this petition.

1450

ABORTION

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I have a petition with many signatures regarding abortion.

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded over 45,000 abortions in 1993 at an estimated cost of \$25 million; and

"Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury, or illness, and abortions are not therapeutic procedures...."

It goes on, and the final, bottom line is:

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cease from providing any taxpayers' dollars for the performance of abortions."

HOSPITAL RESTRICTURING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Thunder Bay and district are suffering from serious deterioration in our health care system because of the closing of hospital beds before community services and long-term-care facilities are available;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make it an urgent priority to provide more long-term-care services in the home and to provide a sufficient number of long-term-care institutional beds and staff in order to restore the standards of health care to an acceptable level."

This is signed by hundreds of constituents of mine, and I'm very proud to add my name to this petition.

COMPENSATION FOR HEPATITIS C PATIENTS

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas many Ontarians have been infected with the hepatitis C virus as a result of transfusions using contaminated blood; and

"Whereas the current compensation package only provides funding for those people infected between the years 1986 and 1990; and

"Whereas in Canada there are at least 20,000 surviving victims who were infected with hepatitis C before 1986, who placed their faith in the blood system and are now suffering;

"Now therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislature of Ontario on behalf of the victims

HEALTH CARE

Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough): I have a petition on behalf of my colleague Noble Villeneuve, the member representing S-D-G & East Grenville. It's a very lengthy petition, which deals with health care in this riding and specifically supports the Health Services Restructuring Commission recommendations. I submit it on the behalf of the member and his constituents.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas nurses in Ontario often experience coercion to participate in practices which directly contravene their deeply held ethical standards; and

"Whereas pharmacists in Ontario are often pressured to dispense and/or sell chemicals and/or devices contrary to their moral or religious beliefs; and

"Whereas public health workers in Ontario are expected to assist in providing controversial services and promoting controversial materials against their consciences; and

"Whereas physicians in Ontario often experience pressure to give referrals for medications, treatments and/or procedures which they believe to be gravely immoral; and

"Whereas competent health care workers and students in various health care disciplines in Ontario have been denied training, employment, continued employment and

advancement in their intended fields and suffered other forms of unjust discrimination because of the dictates of their consciences; and

"Whereas the health care workers experiencing such unjust discrimination have at present no practical and accessible legal means to protect themselves;

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion or unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

I've signed my name to this document.

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): Mr Speaker, I have exactly the same petition to present to this House that was just presented by the member for Parkdale, and I submit that petition with my signature.

NURSES' BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas nursing is key to quality health care; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to provide high-quality care; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to be heard and consulted on health care issues; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to be recognized and treated as equals in the health care system; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to have meaningful participation in all aspects of health care reform; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to be advocates for their communities and the people they care for without fear of reprisal; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to work in settings that are free from harassment and discrimination and that nurture learning, diversity, personal growth, job satisfaction and mutual support; and

"Whereas nurses want the right work in conditions that promote and foster professionalism and teamwork; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to deliver care in an integrated, publicly funded, not-for-profit health care system that is grounded in the principles of the Canada Health Act;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour, promote and respect the nurses' bill of rights as outlined above and to ensure that these rights are enshrined in all aspects of health care."

I'm proud to sign my name to that petition.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr Bob Wood (London South): I have a petition signed by 30 people:

"Whereas nurses in Ontario often experience coercion to participate in practices which directly contravene their deeply held ethical standards; and

"Whereas public health workers in Ontario are expected to assist in providing controversial services and promoting controversial materials against their consciences; and

"Whereas physicians in Ontario often experience pressure to give referrals for medications, treatments and/or procedures which they believe to be gravely immoral; and

"Whereas competent health care workers and students in various health care disciplines in Ontario have been denied training, employment, continued employment and advancement in their intended fields and suffered other forms of unjust discrimination because of the dictates of their consciences; and

"Whereas the health care workers experiencing such unjust discrimination have at present no practical and accessible legal means to protect themselves;

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion or unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

RENT REGULATION

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I have a petition to the Ontario government on rent control.

"Whereas the government has brought forth Bill 96, legislation which will effectively kill rent control in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Liberal caucus continues to believe that all tenants, and particularly the vulnerable in our society who live on fixed incomes, deserve the assurance of a maximum rent cap;

"We, the undersigned, demand that the government of Ontario scrap its proposal to abandon and eliminate rent control and that it introduce legislation which will protect tenants in the province of Ontario."

Since I agree with this petition, I have signed my name to it.

ABORTION

Mrs Barbara Fisher (Bruce): I present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

they want him to continue to work as a custodian at their school; and

"Whereas Mr Reyes has an excellent performance record and should not be discriminated against on the basis of language or in any other way; and

"Whereas the undersigned join the local French community's request that any further attempts to involuntarily displace Mr Reyes from his custodial position at École Sainte-Marie in Simcoe be stopped immediately and want him to continue to work as custodian in that location;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to guarantee to Mr Reyes his right to not be discriminated against on the basis of language."

I agree with this petition and hereby affix my signature.

CHARTABLE GAMING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition which reads as follows:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is trying to impose so-called charity casinos on 44 communities across Ontario as a vehicle to make profits from gambling for government coffers; and

"Whereas these gambling halls will bleed from the communities on which they are imposed the discretionary dollars which might otherwise be spent on goods and services; and

"Whereas the Harris government is attempting to bribe cash-strapped municipalities to accept the new gambling halls by promising to pay a so-called administration fee to operate slot machines in the casinos; and

"Whereas the Harris government is attempting to coerce municipalities into accepting the new 24-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week gambling halls by suggesting that charities may not receive funding;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the Mike Harris government to halt the imposition of new gambling halls, so-called charity casinos, on communities across Ontario."

I affix my signature as I'm in full agreement with this petition.

ADULT ENTERTAINMENT PARLOUR

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): I have a petition I'm presenting on behalf of my colleague the member for Carleton and on behalf of a constituent, Rosemary McKee of Nepean, which reads as follows:

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, draw the attention of the Legislature of Ontario to the following:

"That the city of Kanata accepted an application for an adult entertainment parlour, based on a ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada dated May 17, 1977, that confirmed that an adult entertainment parlour is a lawful business which a municipality has no right to prohibit. To do so would be to attempt to regulate public morality, which falls under the federal jurisdiction of the criminal law. The Ontario Municipal Act, section M-225, allows

"Whereas the Ontario health system is overburdened and unnecessary spending must be cut; and

"Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury or illness and abortions are not therapeutic procedures; and

"Whereas the vast majority of abortions are done for reasons of convenience or finance; and

"Whereas the province has exclusive authority to determine what services will be insured; and

"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require funding for elective procedures; and

"Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is in fact hazardous to women's health; and

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded over 45,000 abortions in 1993 at an estimated cost of \$25 million;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cease from providing any taxpayers' dollars for the performance of abortions."

I affix my name to the petition.

1500

ROAD SAFETY

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): This petition deals with red light cameras.

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas red light cameras can dramatically assist in reducing the number of injuries and deaths resulting from red light runners; and

"Whereas red light cameras only take pictures of licence plates, thus reducing privacy concerns; and

"Whereas all revenues from violations can be easily directed to a designated fund to improve safety at high-collision intersections; and

"Whereas there is a growing disregard for traffic laws, resulting in serious injury to pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and especially children and seniors; and

"Whereas the provincial government has endorsed the use of a similar camera system to collect tolls on the new 407 tollway; and

"Whereas mayors and concerned citizens across Ontario have been seeking permission to deploy these cameras due to limited police resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario support the installation of red light cameras at high-collision intersections to monitor and prosecute motorists who run red lights."

I am pleased to add my signature, along with the many others who have signed it.

SCHOOL CUSTODIAN

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I have a petition concerning the attempt to fire a school custodian who does not speak French, and as I have previously mentioned, he will not be fired.

"Whereas the local French community and staff at École Sainte-Marie in Simcoe have signed a separate petition in support of Mr Santiago Reyes indicating that

the municipality the right to regulate the business, not

prohibit it.

"That pornography is harmful. In 1992 the Supreme Court ruled 9-0 that obscenity is to be defined by the harm it does to women, and not by what offends our values.

"That pornography portrays women as objects, which has a negative impact on the individual's sense of self-worth and acceptance. Pornography reinforces traditional sexual stereotypes and its attitudes towards women and children of male dominance and power, forcing women into subordinate, degrading and dehumanizing roles. It is a threat to the equality and the safety of women. It is also a threat to us as people individually and to our relationships and to the families.

"Therefore, your petitioners call upon the Legislature to:

"(a) pursue changes to legislation regarding the Ontario

Municipal Act;

"(b) pursue discussions with the federal government that would give municipalities the right to prohibit said adult entertainment parlours, goods and services, as well as broaden the restrictions on existing adult entertainment parlours to reduce the incidence of crime."

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move

that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 25, An Act to reduce red tape by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting two new Acts, when Bill 25 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment; and at such time, the bill shall be referred to the standing committee on administration of justice;

That the standing committee on administration of justice shall be authorized to meet to consider the bill for six days at its regularly scheduled meeting times beginning at its first regularly scheduled meeting time following the summer recess;

That, pursuant to standing order 74(d), the Chair of the standing committee on administration of justice shall establish the deadline for the tabling of amendments or for filing them with the clerk of the committee;

That the committee shall be authorized to meet for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill at its regularly scheduled meeting times for a further two days for the purposes of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

That, at 4:30 pm on the second day of clause-by-clause consideration, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall,

without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto;

That any divisions required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a);

That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than the first sessional day following the completion of clause-by-clause consideration. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on the date provided, the bill shall be deemed to have been passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House;

That upon receiving the report of the standing committee on administration of justice, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

That one sessional day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill. At 5:55 pm or 9:25 pm, as the case may be, on such day, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment;

That the vote on third reading of the bill may, at the request of any chief whip of a recognized party in the House, be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding "Deferred Votes"; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceeding on the bill, the division bells shall be limited to five minutes.

Madam Speaker: I'll be sharing my time with the member for Hamilton West, the member for Lambton and the member for Simcoe Centre. I believe we have an agreement to share the time equally among the three recognized parties in the Legislature and I would ask for unanimous consent for that agreement.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Is there unanimous consent for each of the parties to share the time equally? Agreed.

Hon Mr Sterling: Madam Speaker, as you know, this is Bill 25, a bill dealing with a wide range of subjects relating to this government's goal of reducing red tape where it's unnecessary in order to conduct business not only with the government but outside of the government in the private sector.

I'd like to ask the member for Hamilton West, who is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, who has responsibility for this bill, to now represent the government.

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): I'm pleased to address this bill on behalf of my colleague the Honourable David Tsouhouchi.

I would like to speak today about the importance of the bill both to business and to consumers. I will also provide some detail on specific initiatives that the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations is proposing. With this bill, we have looked across government and zeroed in on important red tape reduction initiatives. They

focus on some of our key priorities and the priorities of the

people of Ontario.

Bill 25 proposes amendments to streamline processes and increase efficiency in Ontario's health sector, in the justice system, the rural and agricultural sector and a number of other sectors. All these initiatives share a single goal: to help these and other vital sectors operate as efficiently as possible, maximizing their productive time.

1510

For years before we came to office, business had been trying to get government to understand the crushing impact of red tape, but to no avail. The mountain of regulation continued to grow, stifling business people who just wanted to make a living, to create jobs and to contribute in a meaningful way to our economy. Report after report showed the same thing: that business was spending too much time on paperwork and regulation and not enough on productively creating jobs and generating prosperity.

In 1993-94, the Fraser Institute estimated that small business was spending \$85.7 billion a year simply to comply with government regulations. That's an astronomical amount of money. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business says that 43% of its member firms spend more than six hours a week just filling out forms and meeting a variety of government regulations. Clearly the old system was benefiting no one — not taxpayers, not businesses and not the customers and clients they served. We were elected to change that.

Right from the beginning we made a clear, concerted effort to reduce the regulatory burden. We cut red tape both in our internal processes and in what we impose on businesses dealing with government. We realize that it only makes sense, common sense, to attack both at the same time. We have moved aggressively to root out and abolish unnecessary regulatory rules that serve to thwart rather than advance economic prosperity and job creation. Many of my colleagues during this debate and others have talked about how red tape strangles business. There is indeed some significant evidence that red tape literally chokes the life out of business. When that happens, we all suffer.

Our government has introduced a host of changes aimed at turning this terrible situation around. It's a long process, admittedly, but we are keeping up the fight and will continue to do so. We have seen some proof that we are winning the war. Business and consumer confidence are up, so is investment, and Ontario has seen some of the most significant job growth in its history — 341,000 net new private sector jobs since September 1995, more than 260,000 of them since February 1997. Three years ago businesses were clamouring to get out of Ontario. Now the same number or more want to get back in. They're impressed with our no-nonsense approach to business and they see an opportunity for themselves, an opportunity to be involved with one of the strongest, fastest-growing economies in the country. The bill before us represents our latest initiative to cut red tape and to stimulate growth. The red tape legislation we dealt with in the last session was a good start and there is more

to come. The consumer ministry alone has already eliminated dozens of unnecessary requirements. In the process, we've helped create better business conditions for every-one from film projectionists, who no longer have to undergo more training than pilots, to licensed establishments, which can now use credit cards to buy LCBO products. This will help improve their cash flow without promoting overconsumption.

Bill 25 builds on our red tape success story. MCCR is proposing to streamline Ontario's regulatory environment by, among other things, amending the Land Titles Act to make the hearings process more efficient and to reduce the information required for registering power of sale documents; the Corporations Act to allow directors of for-profit corporations to hold meetings by telephone or other means of electronic communication, and directors of non-charity, not-for-profit organizations to forgo audits in certain circumstances and to buy liability insurance; the Registry Act to permit electronic payments and delivery of documents and to allow the ministry to accept notarized copies of certain documents instead of requiring the originals.

Indirectly, these measures will benefit consumers by ensuring that the businesses and organizations they deal with spend less time on paperwork and more on providing good service. But the bill also contains a number of measures of direct benefit to consumers. I'll give you two examples.

We have proposed amendments to the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act to permit the Real Estate Council of Ontario, a self-managed body in business since last year, to establish consumer protection measures such as the compensation fund. Everyone operating as a real estate agent or broker in the province will be required to pay into the fund, which will give consumers protection similar to that which they now enjoy with travel agents and motor vehicle dealers.

We are also proposing changes to the Loan Brokers Act to allow the use of cease-and-desist orders against unscrupulous operators who continue to prey on vulnerable consumers even after their conviction in court.

Of course, there's a great deal more in this bill. The changes to the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations statutes are important, but only in the context of the overall changes the government has introduced. As I said a moment ago, we recognize that cutting red tape takes time. We are doing it in a way that ensures adequate time for everyone concerned to raise and air the bill eight and a half hours of our attention. But because of its importance to us as a government and to the province's business community and taxpayers, we want to do more. That is why we are sending it to the standing committee on administration of justice for clause-by-clause debate. That is the proper place for the next stage of this discussion to occur. It will give members a chance to analyse the bill in detail.

Cutting red tape is central, not just to our government's agenda but to the sustained prosperity that Ontario's

businesses and taxpayers want and deserve. We want them to be able to put their energy into productive job-creating work instead of paperwork. When businesses come calling in Ontario, we want them to see the red carpet, not the red tape. The benefits of this approach are clear. The economy grows stronger, confidence and optimism reign and people believe once again in their future and that of their province.

This bill represents an important step in the fulfilling of our commitment to cut red tape and help create a more positive business climate in Ontario. So far, we've eliminated more than 500 unnecessary regulations. But cutting red tape is not a goal in and of itself. It is a means to an end. That end is a stronger, healthier, more vibrant economy, an economy that supports business, creates jobs and protects consumers. This bill, Bill 25, moves us closer to that goal.

We are proud of the work done to date and believe it will accomplish the goals we have set for ourselves and that the people of Ontario have set for us. I would like to thank my colleagues on all sides of this House who have provided valuable advice and input. I look forward to hearing more of their views when this bill comes to committee.

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton): It certainly is a pleasure for me to make a few comments on Bill 25, An Act to reduce red tape by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting two new Acts. Let me start by saying that Diane Francis in Maclean's magazine recently had an article that read, "Canadians want and deserve less government and less interference in their personal lives and professional lives." That certainly refers to red tape. There is no doubt that government red tape has a stranglehold on our province and our economy. Red tape amounts to an average of 7% of a company's operating costs. In some companies the percentage is as high as 40%.

Let me give you another good example of what red tape is all about. My colleague from Kitchen-Wilmot recently gave me a chronology of a developer in his riding who is trying to develop a 70-lot subdivision. The process started on January 30, 1987. If I recall properly, today is June 23, 1998, and to this day this particular developer has not received approval. Mind you, I don't want to blame the province for all the red tape that this particular individual or this corporation has encountered. However, we have certainly played a major role. To this day, \$200,465 has been spent trying to receive approval on this 70-lot subdivision. Madam Speaker, I don't know whether that is acceptable to you, but as the article written by Diane Francis points out, I'm sure it's not acceptable to many Ontarians. It certainly is not acceptable to me. It goes to show that red tape is a job killer in many instances.

1520

Another point I would like to refer to is that during our deliberations debating red tape, health, safety and environment are not considered red tape, and I would like to point out that the sheer volume of unnecessary rules,

regulations and government intervention does not have to impact on those three items.

There's no doubt that while the Red Tape Commission has accomplished a lot in the past two and a half years, an awful lot more remains to be done. Let's go back to what I consider was red tape in 1995 when this province was faced with a \$100-billion debt. I don't want to blame any previous government, but there is no doubt that there was a good example of mismanagement, spending unwisely and creating an awful lot of regulations and legislation that were not conducive to sound economic principles. There's no doubt that this government saw this as a major roadblock to job creation in Ontario, and that is why our government wanted to make the province open to business again and to get rid of red tape in order to create jobs.

I keep hearing that the previous government had to introduce the social contract because of a major recession in Ontario. That is true. I think we have to recognize the fact that there was a major recession. However, there are other provinces in Canada that faced the same situation and did not have a social contract. So whenever the opposition keeps talking about, "The economy is booming and that's why we are creating an awful lot of jobs in Ontario," I would like to point out that the tax cut and elimination of red tape have been motives or catalysts towards creating jobs in the province.

We have to recognize the fact that since 1995, 341,000 net new jobs have been created in Ontario. It's the fastest job creation rate in all of Canada. More Ontarians today are working than ever before in the history of Ontario. I think that speaks well of Ontarians, because I am sure that as responsible taxpayers, as responsible citizens, as responsible legislators, it's much more interesting to have people working than to have people on welfare. If we look at what's happening in British Columbia right now, there's no doubt they are suffering from the Asian flu. However, they have raised their taxes, their employment is consequently declining and their welfare rate is rising. Again, it's good proof that by eliminating red tape and eliminating barriers, we can create a sound economic atmosphere in Ontario.

I think my colleague from Hamilton West mentioned eliminating some of the burdens, some of the obsolete regulations and a number of red tapes that we have introduced. I think that without doing this, we would not be experiencing the economic activity we are experiencing in the province.

I'd like to refer back to the bill. When we talk about amending the Public Lands Act to give the Minister of Natural Resources clear decision-making authority governing the use of crown lands based on the land use planning process, this will enable the minister to designate land uses and ensure that significant natural areas are protected. The planning process will result in the development of clear rules for land use and development in planning areas.

The forest and tourism industries in particular require greater land use certainty in order to make long-term investment decisions. I think we need a stable atmosphere

Bill 25 is part of the process in terms of bringing about greater red tape removal. Some of the specific issues that have been dealt with in Bill 25 are designed to protect consumers. Two of the acts being amended will provide additional protection for consumers in specific areas of the marketplace.

The change to the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act will allow the administrative authority set up by the real estate industry to establish consumer protection programs such as a compensation fund in which registrants would be obliged to participate. Such compensation funds have been proven to provide important protection for consumers in such areas as travel and motor vehicle dealers.

Another amendment designed to improve consumer protection is being made to the Loan Brokers Act. This change will allow the ministry to issue cease-and-desist orders against loan brokers who, for example, continue to violate the law even when charges have been laid and the broker has been convicted under the act. This will strengthen protection for consumers by preventing unscrupulous loan brokers from continuing to take money from a consumer before the consumer has actually received the loan.

Those are important changes with respect to loan brokers and with respect to the real estate industry. Quite frankly, in my riding of Simcoe Centre and throughout Simcoe county the real estate industry has flourished because of the measures taken by this government. We were seeing the real estate industry looking for direction from the government in terms of being able to self-regulate. I think it's good news for consumers to know that there's going to be the self-regulation to deal with compensation funds and other protections, so they know where to go.

With respect to the Loan Brokers Act, it's also fundamental in terms of dealing with those safeguards, because not everyone can go to a bank, a trust company or a credit union to get funding in terms of purchasing a home or getting a line of credit or a loan. So we have to put in standards and safeguards to deal with this.

The second mandated goals of the Red Tape Commission were to continue to work with the government and stakeholders to identify unnecessary or out-of-date regulations, to implement the recommendations from its first report, to provide advice on other policy initiatives, to pursue ways to reduce the paper burden and unnecessary and costly delays and procedures, and to improve customer service by government officials. To a large extent that has been done, definitely through the measures taken by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations in terms of the changes they've brought about.

Also there's a challenge to members of the government, the Red Tape Commission, the business community and the public to participate in the process of identifying red tape examples and solutions. A lot has been done by this commission, and you have to commend them for taking this initiative.

That provides long-term stability. There is no doubt that provinces in Canada but we are competing in a global economy. As investors come into Ontario, if they find an area that does not provide stability, I ask you, why would that particular corporation or that particular individual invest in your community if you cannot provide that stability?

Eliminating red tape is also useless unless you find ways to stop it from being created in the future. It's just like being on a treadmill. It certainly is a big job and we need an awful lot of help, not only from stakeholders but from the average citizen, in order to reduce red tape.

To say that this government does not listen, well, let me tell you that I have experienced the other side of the equation. For instance, we recently conducted consultations on the one-window building permit approach. We consulted with 50 stakeholder groups over a period of three months. We wrote a draft report which was circulated to all the stakeholders for their input, and prior to finalizing the draft to the minister, we will take their input. In my opinion, that is certainly listening.

In closing, I'd like to mention that democracy, by its very nature, is about participation. It's only by hearing from the citizens of this province that our government can continue to make changes to improve our economic situation. It is only with these improvements that Ontario businesses will be able to continue to create jobs. I urge all citizens to get involved, to contact their MPPs at their constituency office and get engaged in the process.

Mr Alex Cullen (Ontario West): Mr Speaker, I believe we do not have a quorum here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr David Tilson): Check to see if there is a quorum, Madam Clerk.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Simcoe Centre.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): I am pleased to rise today to speak about Bill 25, the Red Tape Reduction Act. The Red Tape Review Commission, which was established in 1995, has certainly satisfied its mandate in terms of looking at ways of removing red tape barriers and developing ways to prevent them in the future, with the fundamental purpose of job creation and trying to build this economy.

The first mandated accomplishment was the passage by the Legislature of 10 red tape elimination bills to simplify the government processes and improve efficiency. They made 132 specific recommendations to government to reduce and prevent red tape. They developed and coordinated implementation of the regulatory impact and competitiveness test, designed to prevent proposed regulation or legislation from introducing new barriers to job creation and better government. The government approved an extension of the commission's mandate in order for it to continue its efforts in red tape elimination and prevention.

The initiatives of the government in terms of dealing with the economy were not only spurred by the Red Tape Commission but also by other measures they have taken. Ontario's personal income tax rate has been cut four times since 1995. The fifth and final installment of the 30% cut is expected to take effect on July 1. Taxpayers earning \$3 billion, in savings from the tax cut every year. In my riding of Simcoe Centre, and I should say throughout Simcoe county, there will be \$114 million more to be spent in that county in terms of taxpayers looking after their own needs and not the government looking after theirs.

Since the election of this government, 66 tax cuts have been implemented or announced during the mandate. There were 36 in the 1998 budget alone. This is part of the approach to try to help business cope in terms of making sure they can fulfil their role with respect to creating jobs, something that was taken away from them by the previous government, which was strictly anti-business in terms of the measures they took. One of the measures by this government was to eliminate the employer health tax for the first \$300,000 of payroll. That will be up to \$400,000 as of July 1, 1998.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): On a point of order, Madam Speaker: There's no quorum in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Clerk, could you check and see if there's a quorum, please.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

Mr Tascona: I'm pleased to continue with respect to discussing Bill 25, the Red Tape Reduction Act. What I was discussing before was dealing with not only red tape measures but also tax cuts that have helped Ontarians create jobs. Cutting workers' compensation premiums by 5% certainly is a significant measure in terms of helping employers, as is cutting the small business corporate tax rate in half, to 4.75% over the next eight years.

The result of this is that 341,000 net new private sector jobs have been created in Ontario since September 1995. From February 1997 to February 1998 there have been 265,000 net new private sector jobs created. That's the largest 12-month gain in Ontario's history.

Ontario's budget deficit for 1997-98 was \$5.2 billion. That's less than half the \$11.3-billion deficit projected for 1995-96. The deficit is projected to be eliminated by the year 2000-01.

With respect to the economy and fiscal management, that demonstrates that this government certainly is a very good corporate manager with respect to creating jobs and creating the environment for the creation of jobs, and also has the fiscal awareness and the fiscal management skills to make sure that we not only manage the economy but also manage the government in a very responsible manner. I think the three years of achievement of this government, that have come forth obviously show that we are good fiscal managers and know how to deal with the economy.

I would say there's a lot more work to be done; a lot more work to be done with respect to the Red Tape Commission, with respect to dealing with fine-tuning the economy to make sure that the job creation environment is promoted. I think a lot of the measures being taken through the Ministry of Tourism will lead to that, because tourism is one of the big industries that has been forgotten in the last 10 years. This government is making sure that's an important mandate in terms of promoting Ontario. You just can't sit back in this era of international competition and say, "We're just going to sit back and be an isolationist." Ontario has to get out there and promote what the lifestyle is here and promote the best features.

That's very important for my riding of Simcoe Centre, because what we're dealing with is an area that depends a lot on the tourism dollar, not only for fishing, but in terms of skiing and other outdoor activities it is very fundamental. That has to be taken seriously and this government is taking it seriously with respect to the moneys that are going in there to promote tourism.

1540

I also look forward to the chambers of commerce and the municipalities within Simcoe Centre and throughout the province to make sure the tourism program and the strategy that is coming forth promotes Ontario, because that can only result in one thing: more jobs and a better lifestyle for Ontarians.

There's a lot more work to be done and the work that has to be done has to focus on job creation. There are a lot of areas that are getting in the way of not only job creation but also worker choice and in terms of how companies should be operating.

One area is the Employment Standards Act. There's a lot of duplicate legislation out there, not only with respect to the Employment Standards Act in terms of what it sets out. It sets out the minimum standards of employment conditions for workers in this province, but there are other pieces of legislation out there that have conflicting standards. What we should have are uniform minimum standards. For example, the needle trades act sets out a different level of standards for the particular workers it covers. So there's a duplication of legislation when you're dealing with minimum standards and that has to be addressed.

There's also another area that has to be addressed in terms of people getting on with their lives and trying to do the best for their families. Under the Employment Standards Act there's no choice in overtime compensation. If someone wants to work overtime or if an employer wants someone to work overtime, the worker basically has no choice in terms of making an arrangement. They either take overtime pay, where they work in excess of 44 hours a week, or the employer has a lesser standard in terms of overtime pay. They still have to be put in a situation where they have to receive the overtime rate.

A lot of workers out there and a lot of employers would like to be able to say, "We can have a pay-in-lieu situa-

you decided to start up that company again you're going to be unionized when you start up. That's very unfair.

If you have to deal with the market forces of your business and you couldn't survive under the union relationship and you've gone bankrupt, then that should not be a situation where, for the rest of your working life, if you want to be in that particular industry you're always going to be unionized no matter what success you have with respect to your business. That's something that should be addressed in terms of allowing an operator that has been unionized and has gone under through the market forces to be able to start up their business again and not be automatically unionized, which is now provided under the Labour Relations Act.

It is also dealing with sanctions for unnecessary work stoppages. Currently when you're dealing with wildcat strikes, you can go to the labour relations board and you can seek a declaration to have that unlawful strike stopped and get a cease-and-desist order from the labour relations board. That's fine in terms of stopping the unlawful activity, but you need to have in place specific sanctions to make sure that activity stops.

Specific sanctions would certainly go a long way to dealing with the problems that companies have when they're not involved in an unlawful strike or, because it's brought about through political action, where their operations are shut down. There should be sanctions there. If a union wants to take action with respect to an unlawful strike activity, they should be punished in terms of monetary sanctions, in terms of the activity they've brought about that has resulted in damages to the company that has been affected.

I think that's a very fair way of dealing with something. If you're going to do something that's unlawful, you should be responsible for your actions. Unfortunately, the act is not designed to deal with that type of activity because trade unions are essentially private clubs. They're only given statutory authority by a statute such as the Labour Relations Act to bring them the statutory right to organize and to create trade unions and to operate under the Labour Relations Act. By the same token, what should be in place is to make sure that they're responsible for their actions if they decide to take unlawful strike activity. I think that would be a very positive message to be sent out there to the business community in terms of them being affected by unlawful strike activity.

There are also changes that should be addressed with respect to the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The Occupational Health and Safety Act was brought in around 1978. There have been piecemeal legislative changes to that over the years, depending on the government, but there hasn't been a wholesale change of that act in terms of what are the fundamental situations we should be dealing with to make it more relevant to today's workforce, to today's economic environment, and to make Ontario more competitive. That's something that the Red Tape Commission should be looking at and focusing on some specific areas. One of them is to eliminate unneces-

tion," and that gives greater flexibility to the employer. It also increases the lifestyle flexibility for workers. That's something we should be looking at in terms of making sure there is choice in overtime compensation.

Also, another area that should have been looked at in the past and has been looked at by this government is recognizing greater benefits beyond the act. We should be looking at the entire compensation package that an employer provides to its workers, whether they're union or non-union.

At the end of the day, if the entire compensation package is better than the standards provided under the act, then that should be something that should be permitted. We shouldn't be living in straitjackets, where you have to live by this standard and that standard. That doesn't allow for flexibility. That doesn't allow Ontario to compete on the world stage. That's something that should be looked at in the future.

Also, we should be looking at dealing with exemptions with respect to who's exempt from overtime, to create greater flexibility in an operation. Currently, it's only supervisors and other designated categories within an employer that are allowed not to be paid overtime. For a supervisor, it has to be someone who only supervises. We know in this day and age that's something that's not realistic, that someone would be out there just supervising. We know that everyone is working and contributing to the situation. So I think we have to look at some specific type of workers and some specific type of industries to make sure that works.

I think the other area we have to look at in terms of stimulating growth, especially in the employment area, is simplifying and eliminating overtime permits in terms of the hours of work. We're not talking about changing the standard of 44 hours of overtime or 48 hours being the maximum work week; we're looking at situations where permits are not required when we're dealing with an emergency situation or a situation where there's urgent work needed or accidents involving perishable goods that can obviously and significantly affect an employer's operations. There are already provisions in there in terms of getting these permits, but they are very detailed and cumbersome and not realistic in terms of the everyday work world. If you're dealing with accidents or urgent work or perishable goods, you should have a situation where you can work through that. You shouldn't have to deal with a situation where you have to have a major crisis and then look for your permit. You should be able to work within the rules and not have to go to the government every time you need to be able to handle a situation that is very important to your business.

There are other areas that should be looked at. Certainly in terms of the Labour Relations Act, one of the areas that's very important is to allow for double-breasting of companies. Currently under subsection 1(4) of the Labour Relations Act, which was brought in in 1975, if you're certified by a union and you're unfortunately in a situation where your business goes bankrupt, if

sary provisions that are just essentially redundant under the statute.

Also, they should be looking at introducing codes of

practice by a particular industry. Right now it's so generic, it's very difficult for industries to understand what they're required to do under the particular regulations, and in some situations it doesn't make a lot of sense for them to be doing what is being prescribed under the legislation. That's one area where I think we have to look at codes of practice for each industry in making sure that the Occupational Health and Safety Act, which is designed to be an act for internal responsibility, is relevant to the workplace. That's something that is sorely lacking because of the fact that the act has not been changed fundamentally since 1978.

1550

But also we should be looking at undertaking non-legislative changes in terms of targeting the enforcement, in terms of how inspectors should enforce in the workplace, in terms of what their powers are and in terms of making sure that there's immediate impact with respect to enforcement under the act. Under the current system you can have a situation where someone is charged under the act and they don't get to trial for another year or so, or if they have breached an order, there's a time limit with respect to bringing charges under the act, and there could be a one-year time limitation before they bring the charges under the act, and what's the immediate impact with respect to dealing with health and safety.

There should be immediate impact with respect to if you break the law, the enforcement mechanisms are in place. It doesn't necessarily have to mean going to court. It can mean simply a ticket system, to make sure that you get your point across. That doesn't apply just to employers; it obviously applies to the workers at the workplace, making sure that they comply with the legislation, because it's internal responsibility; it's the workers, it's the supervisors and it's also the employers that are responsible to make sure that the system works in a non-union environment. If it's a union environment, obviously the union has a stake in making sure that the system works.

Also we should look for clarification and simplification of the language in the act and have consistency throughout. Right now, we're dealing with promoting health and safety in the workplace and also with changes to the workplace safety act that has to be brought in line with respect to dealing with occupational health and safety, because the fundamental premise is an internal responsibility system under the act. We have to make sure that we're promoting safe workplace practices through a specific mechanism, not only through the Occupational Health and Safety Act but also through the workplace safety act. That's something that has to be fundamentally looked at when we're reviewing the Occupational Health and Safety Act to make sure that we have the best system in place.

The changes under Bill 25, which I have focused on in terms of dealing with other changes that could be put into place with respect to removing red tape and bringing about

recommendations: The actual Bill 25 has a very specific area that it has addressed through different ministries, and that is the beauty of the way this commission has worked. It has dealt with specific ministries and making sure that they are addressing the needs and the concerns not only of the ministries, but also of the stakeholders out there.

There are a lot of areas that have been addressed throughout this, as mentioned by the member for Lambton and also the member for Hamilton West, giving the reasons why red tape is being eliminated and giving examples with respect to the Land Titles Act, the Corporations Act and also dealing with other business changes through the Registry Act. Those changes are long overdue to make sure that the government isn't putting in place a system where they're getting in the way of this type of business activity and also charging fees for almost anything that's going to happen in the real estate area. One knows it's expensive enough to buy a home, but to put more hurdles in the way of homeowners in terms of the red tape that has to be dealt with at the registry office and the Land Titles Act and also to put in place fees for all of these makes it very cumbersome for home buyers.

One other area I'd like to take a look at with respect to the changes under this is the Liquor Licence Act. This is a very important area in terms of the process if anyone has ever dealt with getting a liquor licence. Certainly, for someone who wants to get a liquor licence, it has to be proven that it's in the public interest for them to be able to get a liquor licence. It's a very touchy issue, because obviously there are people out there who don't believe that they want a licensed establishment within their community. Obviously they're against this particular operation in their area because there are too many licensed operators or because they're against liquor and licensed establishments per se, and that's basically what they're about.

Speaking from experience, because I've been involved in that process, it's very difficult. These are very charged hearings. What you find is that everyone takes a side. It's very difficult for the people who have to decide on this issue because of the situation becoming so highly charged in terms of where the licensed establishments should be and trying to create a proper balance within the area. But at the same time, the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario, in administering the Liquor Licence Act, has a very important job exercising its mandate, protecting the public interest with respect to the awarding of licences.

There's a right to have a liquor licence because you have a process under a statute by which you can apply. It's not viewed as a privilege. There's a right to have that licence as long as you satisfy the legislation and it's in the public interest to have that licence. One of the changes we've brought about in the amendments is in terms of the Liquor Licence Board's ability to refuse requests for public meetings when there is a complaint about a potential licensee, because inevitably there's going to be a complaint with respect to this type of activity, even from people who may not live in the area, just because they are against alcohol.

The purpose of the amendments to the Liquor Licence Act is to stop frivolous or vexatious objections from creating unnecessary delays in the processing of a liquor sales licence, and that's fundamental. If, for example, you're in the process of leasing a building and you've done all your renovations and you're moving towards trying to open your establishment, and you have obligations with respect to your creditor, be it a bank or anyone that's going to be lending you money to deal with this operation, you certainly have expectations as to when you're going to be able to operate. You've leased the premises, you've gone ahead and done the renovations, you've made sure you've got your line of credit in place, you may have gone as far as to hire your employees. You've got to make sure that what you're doing is established your operations so when you hit the market you're going to be successful.

The problem is that you've done all that, you've done all your homework and then you go and you apply for your licence and you're put in a process where there's a frivolous or vexatious objection because someone doesn't believe in licensed establishments and all your timetable is put off. That results in a delay which could result in the business not being successful or in the business never getting off the ground because of this type of process, and it's not a short process. You have to wait to get your hearing, so that's a delay, and you also have to go through the process of arguing for your operation to get that liquor licence. This is a very important area.

Some of the examples of where the objections come from are objections from people who oppose liquor in general, those who are not area residents, and other businesses that simply want to reduce competition or stall the approval of a bona fide application. There's nothing more fundamental than interfering in the market process to protect your business interests. Unfortunately, that occurs and is something these amendments will deal with, because a competing business should never be put in a position where they can say it's not in the public interest for company X to set up their restaurant. The fact of the matter is that they have a licence and it's obviously in the public interest for them to operate, so why shouldn't company X be able to operate in the same environment?

Those are very fundamental reasons to make sure, and I think you have to agree that those are frivolous or vexatious if you're just per se against alcohol consumption or you don't even live in the area, you're not even going to be adversely affected, you won't even be affected by this operation, or if basically you're in competition and you want to make sure they do not enter the market at a specific time, because the time you enter the market obviously, depending on the community, is very important.

I think those changes are fundamental because it gets away from the delay process. What we're trying to create by reducing red tape and getting rid of barriers is to make sure that everyone can get out there and compete on a level playing field. I think these amendments to the Liquor

Liquor Licence Act allow that. It's a sensitive enough area right now because of the fact that if you live in an area where there has been a proliferation of a number of licensed establishments, you are going to be sensitive about it, or if there's a licensed establishment that is going to be going close to a residential area or to a high school or to an area where it could be perceived to not be in the public interest. Obviously there are legitimate cases where there should be a hearing, where we should be dealing with whether this licensed establishment is in the public interest, but we shouldn't be dealing with situations where it obviously has nothing to do with the public interest; it has everything to do with removing competition, it has everything to do with basically saying, "I believe in this particular type of society and I'm against alcohol consumption, period."

Other amendments: The ministry obviously has consulted and dealt with community groups and stakeholders about these amendments to the Liquor Licence Act. The amendments are meant to streamline government operations, which is fine, simplify requirements for the public and business, and even the playing field. That's the bottom line: even the playing field with respect to this area. You really shouldn't allow a government process which is being used deliberately to make sure that the playing field is not even.

This is what these amendments are about. These amendments don't reduce any existing controls or eliminate the need for public input. Far from it. There will continue to be considerable ongoing consultation with community groups and stakeholders as we go through this process, but the bottom line is that the existing controls have not been eliminated. That's fundamental for the Liquor Licence Act, because thousands of businesses are created every year through restaurants and people who want to get into the entertainment business that entail their wanting to get a liquor licence.

It's a difficult enough process to get a liquor licence in terms of meeting the controls. We do not need to put in place or have in place any longer mechanisms that can be used to basically fund it at the public purse in terms of providing the hearing mechanisms and the location to deal with this which result in businesses not being able to at least get a start, because once they get started and there's an even playing field, the bottom line is they're going to have to make it on their own.

But when you're dealing with the entertainment business and you want a liquor licence, you should be allowed to make sure that you can at least plan intelligently and say, "I'm not going to be stopped by my competitor, I'm not going to be stopped by someone who has no interest or involvement in this because they live in another area, or by someone who per se is not in favour of alcohol." What we're dealing with is a situation where under the Liquor Licence Act we have evened the playing field, and it's long overdue.

I think because of the job creation — and you have to respect the entrepreneurial spirit of anyone who wants to go into business, especially the restaurant or entertainment business. They shouldn't be put in such a situation where

the *raison d'être* and the fundamental way they're going to be able to compete is to have that liquor licence. We have to make sure there is an even playing field.

The red tape bill, Bill 25, certainly is directed at repealing certain acts and amending certain acts to make sure we have a competitive playing field within Ontario. I understand that we have something like 45,000 regulations. Being a business operator, you not only have to be up with the law, up with the regulations, but you also have to be aware of the changes in terms of the forms that different bureaucracies want you to fill out.

It's tough enough to be a business entrepreneur in this day and age, to make sure you meet your payroll, to make sure you're successful. You shouldn't be put in a position where you have to hire staff or you have to hire experts to basically make sure you haven't broken any laws. The bottom line is that the government should be putting in place an environment in which you know how you can compete. They shouldn't be putting in restrictions that you possibly could be running afoul of because they're interfering with your operation.

What we have tried to do throughout workers' compensation and throughout different labour relations changes and in other statutes is to make sure we're removing the impediments and barriers to someone getting into business but also staying in business to remain competitive. This bill addresses that. As the member for Hamilton West indicated, this will be going through public hearings, and obviously the purpose of that will be to get more input. What's wrong with getting more input when we're trying to remove barriers? Quite frankly, we might find more barriers being removed because of this public input process.

I would like to say that I am very pleased to support this bill, and I am looking forward to its expeditious passage.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on what, as the NDP House leader who goes by me would know, is yet another government motion to shut down debate on yet another bill of great controversy.

What the people of Ontario have to know is that this government refused to call the Legislative Assembly into session until very late in the month of April. In fact, they did it on a Thursday afternoon to try to control the spin, control the news media, by having a speech from the throne on a Thursday and having it disseminated around the province all weekend without the opposition having the opportunity to present its point of view in this Legislative Assembly. So they waited until the very end of April before bringing the House back and then proceeded to bring in legislation which they wished to ram through the Legislature before the end of the month of June without without appropriate consultation, without appropriate discussion, without appropriate debate. This is yet another bill that fits in that particular context.

I noticed — the House leader of the NDP may want to know this as well — that just as I am speaking, yet

another closure motion has been dropped on my desk. I don't know whether we are at 25, 26 or 27 motions now on legislation.

The next one is on Bill 35, which is the Hydro act. Madam Speaker, in your capacity as the environment critic for the New Democratic Party — are you energy as well? Just environment critic, I think, for the NDP. You will know how important it is to have a full debate on the changes which will be made to the hydro situation in Ontario, the governance of hydro, the provision of electric power in this province, and yet I see dropped on the Clerk's table yet another time allocation motion choking off debate. What we're seeing continuously from this government is not a chance to have a wide-ranging discussion of issues in this Legislature and indeed in the public, but rather simply an opportunity for the government to ram through its legislation.

The red tape reduction bill which we see before us, Bill 25, is essentially window dressing in many areas. It carries forward initiatives in nine red tape bills that were introduced in February 1997. The government again, to prevent adequate debate on individual bills, has put together several bills. You'll remember Bill 26, the famous bully bill which was introduced in the fall of 1995 and eventually culminated in a major confrontation in this House in January 1996, when there were hearings held across the province as a result of the opposition uniting to block the government from imposing its will on the House.

1610

Subsequent to that, we've had a change in rules. The Premier didn't like the rules under which we were operating. It's like having a hockey game where you don't like the rules, so you change the rules and you fire the referee. That has happened in some cases. Fortunately, in this House the referee in our circumstances is the Speaker of the House, who is totally independent of political influence and bullying by the government, one should always hope. This of course is carried through all of the people who sit in the chair, and that is the one deterrent we have against the bullying forces of the Harris government, because that has been its style over the past several months.

Just as with the eight red tape bills introduced in 1996, this bill has less to do with reducing red tape for business and consumers and more to do with providing new powers to implement fees and give new powers to cabinet ministers. Neither is particularly helpful. Mike Harris said, during the Conservative leadership campaign and subsequent to that, "A user fee is a tax." In other words, when anybody suggested that a user fee was different from a tax, that when you increased a user fee you weren't increasing a tax, Mike Harris, as Conservative leader, said: "Forget about that. A user fee is a tax."

I have now counted 397 new taxes imposed on this province by Mike Harris, because he said, "A user fee is a tax." If you look at the user fees in this province, they have gone up very substantially in a number of areas.

There may be a case in certain circumstances outside of health care, for instance, and other areas. In certain business circumstances where a business benefits directly from a particular action by government, there may be in some circumstances justification for a user fee. But by and large, the principle of user fees says, "In fact if you have enough money, you can get this service from government, and if you don't, it's just tough luck for you."

If you want to apply user fees in an area where I think a lot of Canadians would understand, you might have girls or boys playing hockey in a particular league. When the municipality, as a result of the downloading of responsibility and financial obligation from the provincial government, is forced to either raise taxes or cut services, or the third option, raise user fees, they have in many cases raised user fees. This means that the children of people who are less fortunate, people of modest income, people of modest wealth, have less of a chance of playing hockey than, for instance, the children of the well-to-do in the province.

Even in house leagues now, you will see that people have to pay hundreds of dollars to register their children, and a lot of people don't have that kind of disposable income. If you're Conrad Black, of course, you can afford that. If Conrad Black had children playing hockey, it would be no problem. Conrad would just write the cheque and away they would go, no matter how high the user fee. But if you are a regular person who has perhaps fallen on some difficult times, then your children might have a difficult time being able to participate in hockey. You just multiply those user fees in other areas. I use that as an example because Canadians often have their children playing hockey, the girls and boys both now playing hockey, and it gives an example of how user fees work.

When I hear them over there talk about the opposition, when they were in power, raising taxes, I have now counted 397 tax increases by Mike Harris. If he keeps doing that, he's going to catch up to his mentor, Brian Mulroney, in terms of raising taxes. Indeed, some in this House would know Brian Mulroney very well. They were Mulroney staffers. The member for Nepean I think was a Mulroney staffer and the former Minister of Health, now the Minister of Energy, was a Mulroney staffer. They've permeated this government to a very great extent.

Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber): You're still running on free trade, the GST.

Mr Bradley: I have now annoyed the member for the Etobicoke-Humber with my reference, because he likes Brian Mulroney. He always has. I want to give this to him. I want to say this positively to my friend from Humber. One thing I will say for him is that, unlike many of his colleagues, who when you mention the name Mulroney run in all kinds of directions, my friend the member for Etobicoke-Humber doesn't. He likes Mulroney and he says that. I'll give him credit for that. I don't mind seeing when the Premier gets up in the House, when a hot potato question comes to the Premier — he comes to the House once a week now, sits down in his seat, and if there's a

Mr Marchese: On a point of order, Speaker. I usually enjoy his speeches, as you know, but there is only a meagre number of people in this House, not sufficient for a quorum. Please check.

The Deputy Speaker: Clerk, is there a quorum?

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for St Catharines.

Mr Bradley: I think I was in the midst of promoting David Tilson to the cabinet in this particular case and making a case for it, but saying that it was difficult for him to get there because there's a long lineup behind the Premier and he would be far back in that lineup.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]): I'll get out of the way.

Mr Bradley: The member for Burlington South has certainly made it there. I won't go beyond that, because I was looking at the last shuffle and saying, "Boy, if he's not in the big-time cabinet, then what's happening in this world?" because he's got lots of experience and political knowhow and so on.

But I digress, and I shouldn't do that, because we're talking about a time allocation motion, although I see him the member for Scarborough West — who is here now, one of the crime commissioners. I saw him. He's not allowed to wear his trench coat in the House. I'm told, but he was looking very fierce. I was wondering whether he would make it or whether perhaps Steve Gilchrist, the member for Scarborough East, would make it into the cabinet, because he's the chief spokesperson. From time to time I have some interest in polls, and I notice that whenever he's on television for a prolonged period of time, the government results seem to be not quite so favourable. So I encourage the member for Scarborough East, who is a true disciple of the extreme right, to speak often and with determination in this House.

I notice one provision of this bill; it's the only new provision, and this is dangerous. Some of you who have been around this House for a while will know this, and some in

tough question, just like Mulroney, he gives it to somebody else. He gives it to the Attorney General or the chief of government whip or Mr Sterling.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): Wait a minute. He's never done that.

Mr Bradley: Well, some day he might do that.

I look around, and I hear there's a cabinet shuffle coming. That's a possibility. Jim Rusk said that in the Globe and Mail, so it must be true.

If I were putting somebody in, I'd be looking to the member for Dufferin-Peel, who has some considerable experience in this House. One of the problems is that he isn't as close to the Premier as some. In fact, I would contend that these days, if the Premier stopped quickly, there could be some collisions taking place. But one of the

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the cabinet must be concerned. The only new provision eliminates the policy and priorities board of cabinet, effectively giving more control of government decision-making to the Premier's office. Well, we know who that means. The means Guy Giorno's got more power. The member for Grey-Owen Sound used one word — I forget what it was — to describe these people, the people who are in the back rooms. He will perhaps tell us some day in the House what it was, but it was not a complimentary term.

The policy and priorities board of cabinet is the most important committee of cabinet. It is the committee that deals with the priorities for the government and the general policymaking for the government. Now that's taken out of the hands of the cabinet and I think that's going into the hands of Guy Giorno and the whiz kids in the back rooms of the Conservative Party, the 20-something and 30-something YPCs who have all the answers to the problems of this province and are far wiser than any elected member of this Legislature.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North): Far wiser than the entire Liberal advisory committee.

Mr Bradley: Of course those who are still hopeful of getting into cabinet interject in favour of Guy Giorno and that crew, because they know that Guy is going to be checking off checkboxes for who's getting into cabinet. The member for Burlington South is in trouble now, because he doesn't necessarily cater to those people.

Mr Spina: At least they know how to do a petition that's acceptable, Jim.

Mr Bradley: I tell my friend from Brampton that if he wants to get into the cabinet, like his colleague, he should be good to Guy Giorno and Deb Hutton. Deb's now been with the Tory caucus 10 years; celebrating her 33rd birthday in mid-August. She has all kinds of power. Tom Long yet. He has power.

All these people advise, so what I'm saying to the members of the Conservative caucus who want into the cabinet is, yes, be nice to Mike, laugh very loudly at the jokes, lead the applause when Mike speaks and gives an answer and zaps the opposition, but the most important thing is to ingratiate yourself with Guy Giorno and the whiz kids, because they will be advising the Premier on who goes into the cabinet, who gets shuffled one way or another.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): What bill are we doing?

Mr Bradley: I thought the member for Grey-Owen Sound would enjoy this diversion, because I have heard some of his comments in the hallway about some of the people who have far more power than he within this Legislature.

What I'm saying is that by abolishing the policy and priorities board of cabinet, you're giving more power to the whiz kids, just when you thought that when you went to the caucus meetings and the Premier said: "Oh, I'm going to listen to you people. You're the real politicians out there. You have your fingers on the pulse of your

ridings" — you all thought he was being honest with you, whiz kids in the back room, are going to have even more power. Some of them get elevated to the cabinet. I see that my friend Tony Clement, the member for Brampton South, has less power now that he's in the cabinet than he had when he was a whiz kid. Some of you people should perhaps ingratiate yourself with the whiz kids.

It says here in my briefing note, because we get some briefing notes too, "All of Bill 25 is, for the most part, window dressing." That's what it says, right in the notes. It says it's window dressing. You're not the only ones who can get some notes; I can get some too to refer to once in a while. It says: "While some schedules in the bill remove obsolete legislation or provide a minimal amount of government operations streamlining, for the most part the legislation implements various government downsizing projects, such as eliminating regional assessment review offices, and replaces licensing fee and regulatory controls previously governed by orders in council with direct ministerial control. Downsizing and ministerial control over fees have little to do with eliminating red tape and everything to do with cutting services and raising revenue."

Do you know something? I even agree with this. That is what's happening in this bill.

What happens when you give the power to the minister and not to the whole cabinet? Let me tell you, I want all members of the cabinet to know what's going on, because what will happen is that the Minister of — I'm not being personal; just take it generically — Natural Resources will have a fund-raiser, let's say.

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): Someone else.

Mr Bradley: Someone else? Okay. The Minister of Transportation will have a fund-raiser and people will come to the fund-raiser and pay — what's the new amount you can get now? You can pay up to a thousand bucks a person and \$7,000 from the people — Conrad Black will be there. They will come to the fund-raiser and they will whisper into the ear of the minister, or better yet, into the ear of the minister's assistant, the ones who carry the briefcases. They will whisper in their ears and then you'll see something change, when only the minister has control.

I want Cam Jackson to be able to have some say, I want David Turnbull to have some say when there's a minister wanting to jack up the rates for any particular service in that ministry, to increase the fees, or to lower the fees, for that matter, or to remove certain regulations. I want all of cabinet to view that, but instead only the minister is going to do that. That becomes dangerous and that means, again, that the people — you know who the minister reports to: the deputy minister, who reports to the Premier's office. It's more and more —

Mr Baird: That was the Liberal way, Jim. The ministers don't report to the deputy ministers.

Mr Bradley: I say to the member for Nepean, who knows all these things already, that what happens is that the Premier appoints the deputy ministers, and that's how

you control the ministers. I can tell you that with the whiz kids, with the deputy ministers being appointed by the Premier and answerable to the secretary of cabinet and ultimately to the Premier — don't be fooled. The deputy ministers are not reporting to the minister. The Premier controls all. The deputy minister and that minister had better be synchronized, because over all it's controlled from the centre.

Interjections.

Mr Bradley: I've got some of the Tory backbenchers, or people who are wannabes, very exercised by what I'm saying. Maybe they have the connections with the people who really pull the strings. What I'm worried about is that if you give an individual minister this power, that can be somewhat dangerous.

When we talk about regulatory changes, it often means

weakening regulations, regulations which were put in place to protect the health of people and the environment of the province and to protect consumers. If you're a person who thinks these regulations get in the way of your doing business because you have to undertake certain governmental activities, you may be applauding this government if it removes those regulations. The people of the province won't applaud it. The people who spend a lot of money and resources and time in their own businesses to comply with existing regulations in the province won't applaud it. But the people who don't like these regulations will applaud those kinds of changes.

I notice, for instance, now that they've taken the Niagara Escarpment Commission out of the purview, the control, of the Honourable Norm Sterling, who was, as Provincial Secretary for Resources Development, responsible for the development of the first Niagara Escarpment plan — now that they've taken it out of his control and given it to the Minister of Natural Resources and that ministry, we're seeing some substantial changes. I always call that "the ministry of the exploitation of natural resources."

The member for Grey-Owen Sound smiles because he's got one of the good ol' boys on there now, one of the good ol' boys who believes you should abolish the commission, that you should be able to have a severance with every sandwich, for dessert.

The former environment minister, the member for Guelph, knows in her heart of hearts why it should remain under the purview of the Minister of the Environment. The member for Bruce, who has a more progressive view, I understand, about the preservation of the Niagara Escarpment lands than perhaps the member for Grey-Owen Sound, will understand what we're saying.

I saw a decision that appears to be coming down in the Niagara Peninsula. Remember you people used to laugh when I'd say, "There will soon be an Escarpment Hilton, an Escarpment Holiday Inn, an Escarpment Ramada Inn, an Escarpment Embassy Suites" and so on. Well, it's starting.

1630

With the new people now on the escarpment commis-

sion, there's a proposal that came forward just outside of

St Catharines, which at the present time has a winery on it and a wonderful restaurant, a marvellous place, exactly what you should do to cater to ecotourism. That's not that land," they say. Now there's a proposal that comes forward for some condominiums on that land and a culinary school on that land. What is beautiful now, a good business operation, an excellent use of the land, and I commend the owner for replanting all of these grapes, but now we've got a proposal for further development.

Do you think that the next winery isn't going to want the same thing? Do you think that the next person on the escarpment who owns land isn't going to want to do exactly the same thing? It's just going to be wild development taking place. You're taking what is an excellent operation today, which I commend the owner for, and we're going to set a precedent which will allow development all along the escarpment.

I'm not opposed to development in appropriate places and with good planning. I like to see it in the province. I think it's good. When I see development taking place in downtown Toronto, for instance, I'm delighted to see that happening, within urban boundaries and so on. All I'm saying is, don't kill the goose that lays the golden egg. When you look out of this restaurant, for miles all you can see is Lake Ontario and vineyards, and that's what makes it so attractive for "agritourism," the word we use in the Niagara Peninsula. But if you start putting condominiums on it, you start putting other buildings on it, is it really agritourism then or is it simply development? It sets a precedent.

I know there are some people in favour of it. I'm sure my friend the member for Lincoln is all for it. I really wonder about it, though. Here I am complimenting what's already there, which is an aberration from what one would normally expect to find, because it has a wonderful restaurant and some ancillary buildings as well. It's a wonderful development, and I see that when you start removing regulations, when you start changing the makeup of the Niagara Escarpment Commission, you start destroying something that's pretty unique to this province, and unfortunately that's beginning to happen. I know there will be people who applaud it and say that I'm wrong and they're right. I wish that were the case.

In agriculture, food and rural affairs, I know my colleague from Oakwood is eager to enter into this and I will certainly turn it over to him in a very short period of time and he'll deal with some specific aspects of this particular bill.

I simply look at it and say, "Always be cautious when you see the removal of regulation and the removal of red tape." In some cases it's a good thing and the red tape should be removed — in some cases. I'm not dogmatic enough on this to say it's not so. But when you set up certain regulations — look at the number of people now affected in consumer and commercial relations, elderly people.

The minister responsible for senior citizens is with us this afternoon and through his portfolio he would know

how vulnerable elderly people are to these shysters and con artists who prey upon elderly people. Elderly people are often very trusting of others in our society, people who like to believe in the best in their fellow human beings, and these people prey upon them. If you don't have the regulations, if you don't have a consumer and commercial relations ministry with the teeth and with the staff to deal with those problems, then they prey on them.

The crime commissioner would be interested in that as well. I know he will be advocating against removal of regulations which protect consumers and advocating in favour of tougher laws in this regard. There might even be some young offenders doing this, so that would certainly get him even more interested in this than otherwise.

In the field of health, Attorney General, agriculture and rural affairs, there are changes that are made. Don't get everything in this bill is detrimental. Some of it is good; some of it you'll find there's a pretty good consensus in this House. But I think hidden behind this is really the opportunity to raise user fees in this province.

The conservation authorities are very concerned. They believe there's an amendment that affects them that will leave gaps that will result in the elimination of regulations prohibiting polluted landfill to be buried near sensitive water areas. Previously, under the Public Lands Act, cabinet approval was required for the disposition of crown lands. The minister himself will now have sole approval. Again, don't give this power to one person. At least have the cabinet as a whole have a say over who's going to get the crown lands.

Mr Murdoch: But you just said one person can run it. **Mr Bradley:** That's what you need. You need to spread that out.

Mr Murdoch: You've got to get your story straight.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Member

for Grey-Owen Sound.

Mr Bradley: The member for Grey-Owen Sound is

coming on as a government man now. He's usually an independent-minded guy. He says things out in the hall- way from time to time which differentiate him from his colleagues, but I hear him this afternoon being a government man. I know there's a shuffle coming, Bill, but I've never known you to be the kind of person to line up for

that. Lastly, I hope the red tape that's eliminated, and my friend from Oakwood would agree with this, will eliminate the squandering of public taxpayers' dollars on a political pamphlet, blue and white in colour, which is put out by the Ministry of Health and costs \$1.270 million, that's pure government propaganda. I know each one of us in this House would rather see this money applied to the provision of good health care for people. We could all think of instances where we could have this money used for something useful. Even in Carleton Place, they'll be getting this particular pamphlet in French and English. They've already received a pamphlet from David Lind- say, the former principal secretary to the Premier, former Conservative candidate, former director of Conservative

caucus communications. He sent out a pamphlet, all propaganda, and it cost three quarters of a million dollars. Then we had this other one come out that I hope this red tape bill will have some influence on. It said, "Are We on the Right Track?" and again it was in blue and white. The taxpayers of this province paid for this: \$700,000.

Now I hear the Solicitor General has got one coming out. There's going to be one coming out in the summer. I don't think it's going to say anything about the crime

commission, but it's coming out. I want to tell the Conservative members — it's a bargain this time — \$400,000 is

going to be spent on this next one.

I'm just giving you a little tease, a little preview. I want the person who knows this bill inside out, my good colleague from Oakwood, to be able to carry on and tell you why you should not be proceeding with this time allocation motion on this bill.

1640

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): I want to congratulate my colleague from St Catharines for his incisive analysis

of this bill and the time allocation motion which is before us. I was thinking when he was speaking it's like following Casey Stengel. As you know, Casey Stengel, after he

managed the New York Yankees, managed the New York Mets, and you wonder who followed Casey Stengel as

manager of the Mets. It's pretty hard to remember because all you remember is Casey. Anyway, I want to thank him for his comments, and he does talk about the importance

of the traditions of this Legislature.

This bill we're debating right now — actually, we're debating a motion about the allocation of time that's going

to be devoted to debate on this bill. What this government is doing, as it has done as a routine thing now, is to put

forward what they call a time allocation motion, which is really a motion for closure, or a guillotine motion, as they

called it in the past, cutting off debate. At one time this was done in this Legislature usually in extraordinary

circumstances, but recently, especially in the last year, since they changed the rules in this place, time allocation

and closure motions are quite the norm here. In other words, it's not something you do in an extraordinary

situation; it's something you do almost on a regular basis.

It is one of the trademarks of this government that they invoke closure to cut off debate. The public sometimes

feels that perhaps they shouldn't be debating as much as they do, but I'd just remind the public out there that one of

the reasons debate is critical is that it gives the public and interested parties time to intervene on bills of this

magnitude.

This is an omnibus bill. This is a very extensive bill. It may not have blockbuster issues in it, but it has a number

of provisions which affect almost everyone in Ontario. There are amendments and deletions that affect everything

from the Business Corporations Act to the Business Practices Act, the Certification of Titles Act, the Athletics Control Act, the Land Titles Act, the Collection Agencies

Act. Almost everybody in Ontario will be affected by these changes. Not to debate these changes as being good or bad per se, but when there's so much change, it's

he said he could imagine what could happen to a senior who's perhaps living on a very small, meagre pension —

Intjections.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Nepean, the

Member for Cochrane South.

Mr Colle: Anyway, as I said, this senior was con-

cerned. In fact, he had been a pharmacist his whole life and he was concerned that there'd be a lot of seniors who are on small, meagre pensions, who are trying to make ends meet, who if they were to go for this test, which most doctors prescribe, trying to find whether you might be suffering from prostate cancer, you have to pay a \$20 fee to get your blood tested.

Interjection: Wow, 20 bucks.

Mr Colle: The member out there is laughing and say-

ing, "Wow, 20 bucks." Perhaps 20 bucks isn't much to a

Conservative member. I don't know what this is all about,

but \$20 is a lot of money. The \$20 means that some man

who may be suffering from this cancer will not take that

test. This pharmacist told me there are a lot of seniors who

aren't getting their prescribed medicines because of the

user fees imposed by this government. There's the

deductible and so much for every medicine, so there are

seniors right now who are not getting the medicines they

are prescribed. They're deciding not to take it because

they're afraid they may not be able to make ends meet.

User fees add up, and in this Bill 25 there is literally

the potential for hundreds of new user fees to be imposed

by regulatory discretion of the minister without any kind

of questioning from this House — no questions, no scru-

tiny — on all these changes.

If you look in this bill, you will see page after page,

"Except with respect to matters for which the director may

make orders under section 100, the minister may make

orders conferring on the director...; specifying...; govern-

ing...; specifying...;" — section after section, all talking

about the minister's powers. For example, paragraph 17 of

section 101.1: "requiring the payment of fees to land

registrars upon the performance of any official func-

tion...." This is where you get all kinds of potential refer-

ences to a minister and his fee allocation powers, which

this bill does. It gives, as I said, the minister the ability to

do that. We cannot question in the House whether he does

that or not.

Then on page 59, section 163.1, "The minister may

make orders...specifying the duties...; specifying the man-

ner...." There's another 22 provisions there as to what the

minister's powers are: "governing the mode...; requiring

that printed copies..." — everything — and then, again,

"19. Specifying the amount of fees payable under this

act...." That is the power of the minister to levy fees on the

citizens of Ontario without any question, without any, as I

said, second look, by the members of this House and

certainly not by the public. That's why it's important to

have debate on bills like this, that's why it's important for

the public to have input and raise questions.

You really wonder if the public is well served when

they're rushing ahead with bill after bill. Yesterday

incumbent upon a government to allow scrutiny of the changes. When you rush bills through and invoke closure, you don't give the public and interested affected parties an

opportunity to do that. That is what we're debating

here: this time allocation motion cutting off debate on this

Red Tape Reduction Act.

The one negative part about this bill that I find most to

my dislike is the fact that there is a continual movement

towards more regulatory power in the hands of the mini-

sters. There's the movement towards more executive

power. Traditionally the Ontario Legislature has had a lot

of power: the legislative branch, where the members of the

House and committees had power to influence and affect

the course of decisions in lawmaking. But as we've seen

since Bill 26, which was introduced by this government

almost three years ago, this erosion of legislative power

continues.

This bill, Bill 25, continues on that path of eroding

legislative power and giving more power to the executive

branch, and that branch is probably the least in touch with

the populace, with the ordinary citizens of Ontario. A lot

of the regulatory enhancement here goes to the minister,

and when the minister makes these changes to laws that

affect all Ontarians, it's very difficult for ordinary Ontar-

ians to find out, first of all, what the minister is even con-

templating, and you don't find out until after the fact that

the minister has made regulatory changes. They get

reported in something called the Ontario Gazette and I

wonder how many people in Ontario read the Gazette.

The changes which are made can affect people in

everyday life in this province, yet this is the trend: the shift

of power, where the minister doesn't have to answer to or

be questioned by anyone in this House or by the general

public in terms of making changes that affect commerce,

that affect everything from health to just the general wel-

fare of this province. These are some of the more negative

aspects of this bill.

We no doubt need some changes and updating and

modernization of old pieces of legislation; that is a given.

But under that guise, they've put together this huge omni-

bus Bill 25 and thrown everything in there, with one of the

underlying consequences being more regulatory power,

less legislative power and the ability for ministers to, for

instance, as the member for St Catharines said, do things

about user fees. As Mike Harris, the Premier, said when

he was in opposition, "A user fee is a tax." There is the

ability for ministers to impose all kinds of extra user fees

at their discretion without the public even knowing about

it. But it will affect different segments of the population,

so by the time the user fee is implemented, it's almost too

late.

I ran across a user fee this week myself. It's an exam-

ple of what can happen. There was a senior citizen who

had just undergone some prostate cancer treatment, and he

told me he was shocked that when he went to get PSA

testing, which is a screening device for prostate cancer, he

had to pay a \$20 user fee. That is something that was a

shock to this senior. He was a professional individual, but

something done about red light running, about cars that are not obeying basic traffic signals."

How far have we come in this province when the cars don't stop at, never mind the orange or amber light, but don't stop at the red any more? If you stop at a red light, God help you, because the car behind you may hit you from behind or pass you because you had the audacity to stop at a red light.

That's what this government should be doing something about instead of doing things that give ministers more powers to levy fees. That's what their priority is. Their priorities are about power, about shifting power from the legislative branch to the executive branch. As the member for St Catharines says, when you shift power to the executive branch, who gets the power? It's the unelected, invisible whiz kids who lurk in the back rooms of this Legislature and the back rooms of government offices.

There's where the power goes.

When you talk about the power going to the executive branch, that's where the power is shifting. That is a very dangerous precedent, a very dangerous trend that this government has embarked upon. When they talk about the executive branch of government, we no longer even talk about the cabinet ministers.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Fort York, do you have any problem?

Mr Marchese: I beg your pardon, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Okay. Somebody has the floor.

The member for Oakwood.

Mr Colle: Anyway, that is what is happening. The executive branch now means the whiz kids' branch. That's what it is. It's the branch of the whiz kids.

As I said before, I would like to see their pictures on these walls. Let's find out who these people are who make up bills like Bill 25. Let's find out their name, phone number, fax number and e-mail address so we can e-mail the whiz kids. If we've got a complaint about what this government is doing, let's complain to the real power brokers. That is what has to be done, bringing these people who make the decisions under public scrutiny. This bill gives the whiz kids more power. They don't need more power. It's the people, the taxpayers who need more say and more power, not the unelected, invisible whiz kids who lurk in the back rooms of the government offices.

In terms of this government and its trend, we see more and more examples of a government ruling by decree, by edict, by regulation. That means the government, which is not under public scrutiny enough, is a government that you can't question because they do things behind closed doors where you don't have to have the public present. That's what this type of bill does, it moves that behind closed doors.

If you look at this bill, one section here is about the Public Hospitals Act. If you try to go to a public hospital board meeting and ask them questions to find out why they're closing your hospital, why they're giving pay raises to hospital executives, you can't get any answers from them. These hospital boards, some of them that

1650
refuse to sit.

They're in such a hurry to jam bills through about campaign financing. They're jamming this bill through, bill after bill. Where are their priorities? Cities like Ottawa, London, Hamilton, Toronto and Mississauga have all asked for this government to do something about the rampant red light running that's happening all over this province. There's a total disregard for the safety of pedestrians, other motorists, cyclists. This government refuses to move quickly to bring forth the ability of municipalities to pass a bill which allows for safety cameras. This is incredible, a condemnation of this government's priorities.

They're always in a hurry for their political agenda, not the public's political agenda. The public is crying for help on this road rage and this rampant disregard for safety on our streets. This government has been stalling on this, making excuses after its talk about red tape. There's so much red tape about public safety that maybe this government should change its colours from blue to red. They refuse to move on something that's workable in other jurisdictions and they stall, make excuses, defer. It's almost a new excuse every day about why they can't have safety cameras at dangerous intersections. Every day from the minister and the Premier we hear excuses.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Cochrane South, that's the second time I warn you.

Mr Colle: If this government had its priorities straight, it would be putting forth bills that deal with what the public wants, and the public wants something done about cars that daily run red lights.

These cars are not just running red lights; they are hurting people at these intersections. There are 55,000 collisions at intersections across this province every year. Sixteen people were killed in the GTA last year at these intersections, and this government stalls, makes excuses. I was just appalled that yesterday they refused to sit for a week in the summer to help bring forward this safety bill.

They say they're interested in cutting down red tape and getting things done. Why not get something done that the public wants for a change? There's nobody knocking at the door to say, "Give the minister more regulatory powers, give the minister more power to raise user fees." The public is knocking at the door saying, "We want

aren't open to public scrutiny, have unbelievable power over your local hospital, and the public has no say to change what they have done or what they plan to do.

In the red tape bill, Bill 25, there is no mention about giving the public more access to the hospital boards that run our community hospitals. In fact, it's getting so bad that my so-called community hospital, Northwestern General Hospital, was closed by this government, and now they have this mega-hospital called the Humber River Regional Hospital. You can't get near the place. They're sworn to secrecy. If any staff member ever gives the public any information, they're brought up on the carpet and told: "You'd better shut up. Don't talk to the public." That is what is happening. The public is being shut out from things like hospitals and how they are run, because now the hospitals are big corporate boards that are distant from the people.

In this red tape bill they did nothing about that. This would have been a wonderful opportunity for this Red Tape Commission to open the hospital boards up so that the public could actually ask questions of hospital boards, to find out why they're laying off nurses, why there are line-ups in the hallways, why you can't get into intensive care. These are the questions the public likes to ask, but you can't ask them. There's nobody who will answer these questions.

This government is embarking on closing 11 hospitals in the city of Toronto and 35 in the province, and it wasn't even debated in this Legislature. There's no bill. They did it all with another appointed commission, the Health Services Restructuring Commission. Who has ever seen these people? Where are these hospital restructuring commissioners? When have they ever been questioned by the public? This is the kind of thing this government loves doing. It loves setting up more power and giving it to invisible, unaccountable agencies or agents of the government who the public can't question. This is not good democracy, it's not good government, and it becomes very acute when bill after bill tends to reinforce this type of executive power in the hands of very few.

This government is hell-bent on doing this no matter what. As you know, this week they're also introducing the buying-the-election bill, where they're going to invoke closure. They don't want debate. They don't want public hearings on this bill they've put forth, which they're going to try buying the election with, the buying-the-election bill. They're going to have all this extra money to spend by the central party in power. They're going from \$1.2 million to \$4 million. They want to try buying the election by passing an act. They've asked: "Why would we have public hearings on this buying-the-election bill?" Well, they don't want public hearings on the buying-the-election bill. I wonder why they don't want it. What are they afraid of?

Let's take the buying-the-election bill out to the public. Let's have public hearings in all the ridings across this province and see if the public agrees with your bill on buying the election. I don't think the public wants you to pass that bill. That's why you won't go to public hearings.

We've got fundamental changes taken in the way we are governed in this province, and the most fundamental shift we've seen, as I said, started with Bill 26 and continues with this Bill 25, with the buying-the-election bill they're going to ram down our throats in the next day or so. This government continually tries to, essentially, control things. It wouldn't be bad if it was control in the hands of all the members of the Legislature or even all the members of the Conservative government caucus, but it's not them, it's in the control of a very few in the back rooms. They make the decisions, they decide what bills will be passed, what laws will be passed with very little public scrutiny, little public accountability.

1700

When you have less accountability, you have a public that's shut out from the way government works. Sooner or later, and it is happening in many parts of this province, the public becomes alienated. The public is saying: "Why didn't they ask me before they closed my hospital? Who gave this hospital restructuring committee the right to close my hospital without asking me?" These are people who went door to door raising nickels and dimes and dollars and \$5 to build their community hospital; the government comes in with their hired guns and closes the hospital it took them 20 years to build by door-to-door campaigns.

That's what this government is doing. It's basically saying to people who have always contributed, who have always participated in their community, whether it be the hospital, whether it be at the local Lions Club — whatever it is, these are people who want to give to the province — now they're saying, "No, no, we are going to now start ruling and governing by edict." There are a lot of people in this province who are getting pretty fed up with that. They're saying: "There's nothing in an election that gives you the right to take away my powers of citizenship. There's nothing in an election that gave you the power to rule by edict or by regulation."

That's what this government is doing. It's saying: "We got elected. We are now going to rule by edict. We're going to rule by closing down debate. We're going to cut off debate. We're going to try to change election rules so we can win." That's the type of thing people are getting pretty fed up with. They're saying, "I may have voted Conservative, but I didn't vote to give you the right to basically control everything in this province."

Most Ontarians are fairminded. They want debate. They want questions. Most Ontarians want accountability. They want to be able to question ministers. They want to be able to question people who make decisions. But bills like Bill 25 and cutting off debate, as they do on all these bills, give Ontarians less ability and opportunity to question and find out if the law is good or bad. That's very

office or in the Solicitor General's office shredded, or what happened to them? The OPP officer who was assisting the Solicitor General at that time said he left all the documents there, and they should have been there. All of a sudden, they have disappeared.

The family of Dudley George and the first nations people all across Canada are not going to have any peace and there is not going to be any healing taking place until this matter of the Dudley George death has had a full and public inquiry, and we're going to continue to raise that issue in the Legislature and out there in the public with the media.

The Globe and Mail has picked up on the issue, and there's an article, "Efforts to Find Ipperwash Papers 'Not Reasonable,' Privacy Boss Says." There are lot of unanswered questions out there, plus the fact that documentation that was supposed to be there, if it's still there — the Solicitor General in his response today said that any documents pertinent to that issue have been released or will be released. It's not up to him to decide what is pertinent to the wrongful death of Dudley George. It's up to them to make sure that these documents are brought forward and to have the case wide open. If they don't want to come in front of the committee — they have blocked us from going in front of four different committees now. The opposition parties are allowed to bring forward a standing order 124 request to make sure they have a chance to debate issues that they think are of interest.

Mr Bradley: Oh, well, the Premier comes in every day to answer questions on this.

Mr Len Wood: The Premier doesn't show up very often. He's out there campaigning, because he knows that if the economy decides to go for a loop — it could happen, because all the jobs that were created in Ontario, if any happened in the United States. It has nothing to do with what the Conservative government has done here in Ontario. There are articles in the Toronto Star saying that is the case.

If we look at all the bills that are being rammed through this Legislature over the last week, they are being rammed through because the government did not come back when it was supposed to come back. They delayed for a month, and as a result they decided that instead of dealing with the problems we have in health care and education, the mess they created out there, where the funding for operating budgets in all the hospitals right across Ontario were cut and we're going to have 37 hospitals closed — we're already hearing that because of the funding cuts in the education system, there are going to be schools closed in southern Ontario and I'm sure we're going to see that in northern Ontario.

1710

I've raised the issue here a number of times on health care that in Kapuskasing, for example, when we take in 14 doctors. Yet this government has done nothing, even though hundreds of letters have been sent to the Minister of Health and the Premier complaining, "Why don't they

stoner is looking into where all the documents went. Were any answers. The Information and Privacy Commission today to the Solicitor General, and he was unable to give the documents that were supposed to be in the Premier's

ber 1995.

George death that happened at Ipperwash back in September 1995.

Mr Len Wood: This is why it's going to the justice committee, to make sure they can stone wall on the Dudley thing to the justice committee. I wondered.

Mr Bradley: Oh, that's why they're sending everything to the justice committee. I wondered.

allowing the natives to enter the —
The MNR had no problem with, after Labour Day, 1995, the provincial park at Ipperwash was shut down, a government do this. Shortly after taking office back in in, the first time in over 100 years that we have ever seen the committee so we could find out who ordered the OPP prevent the NDP caucus from bringing witnesses before and they have stonewalled and done everything to try to We have submitted in front of four different committees, on how Dudley George died at Ipperwash three years ago, some standing order 124 requests in to have some debate make sure that the NDP does not have a chance to get time, but one of the reasons for that is that they want to Bill 25 is going to go to the justice committee at that

September or in October.
journal for about three months and come back at the end of enough heat in the Legislature and they're going to admit last week. The government decided that they've taken Legislature comes back in October — because this is the into committee hearings that are going to be held when the reasons Bill 25 is being time-allocated and is being put So our listening audience out there will know, one of the I want to go back a little bit to question period today.

I want to go back a little bit to question period today. fear might drag out debate.
and use the guillotine on the opposition parties, who they this spring, now they feel they have to shut down debate because the government was a month late coming back red tape bills that were brought forward last year and, section of the government, in all of the ministries. They're 200 pages, and it makes amendments and what the government calls getting rid of red tape in basically every the bill that are major changes. The whole bill covers over There's no doubt about it, there are a lot of sections in today and we're debating that particular bill.

received on the reason why Bill 25 is being time-allocated that is a guillotine bill, a motion to shut down the debate It's kind of interesting that we're here debating a bill member for Cochrane South.

sharing my time with the member for Fort York and the **Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** I'm going to be

it's not good for democracy.
against that tradition. It's not good for the province and ince great. Bills like this and closing down debate go Lord Durham back in 1837. That's what made this prov- tive government. That's what this province was founded fundamental in the precepts of responsible and representa-

Even when some of the presenters were coming forward to deal with the death of Dudley George — some of them came in front of the committee under Bill 22 and Bill 15, and the Conservative members on those particular committees decided that they were going to interrupt the presenter, one of whom was a person by the name of Father Barry McGroarty, who was making a presentation on workforce. The Conservative members at that time decided they were going to disrupt him and his presentation. That's nothing but just being ignorant to the concerns that people have out there.

Mr Bradley: Remember when they went after —
Mr Len Wood: Yes, anybody who comes in and makes a presentation and they don't agree with their opinions, they decide to go after them and shout them down and whatever. This is not the way a caring, concerned, compassionate government should operate, but the feeling I'm getting in the north is that this is not that type of government. It's not the same Conservative government that was in power for 42 years prior to 1985 that ran up billions of dollars in debt.

This is more of an attack government that decides the teachers are bad, all the workers that are unionized are bad people. The people on unemployment insurance who are unable to find a job after a certain period of time and go on welfare are bad people. They have to be knocked down and their allowance for food and shelter taken away. At one point just a few months ago they decided that women on welfare who are expecting shouldn't be allowed to have vitamins, that they might use that money to drink beer. As a result, they cut off the \$25 or \$30 that women need in the last few months of their pregnancy to make sure they stay healthy and produce a healthy child.

It has been three years of attack, attack, attack. There is not a single person in this province who hasn't been affected one way or the other. When you download all the services the government was normally giving in the province, we know that property taxes are going to have to go up. Either property taxes go up or services get cut. There are going to be a lot of services cut.

I'll give you an example. The highway going through Kapuskasing is very similar to the Trans-Canada Highway. It's an extension of Yonge Street that goes from the Legislative Building here to Vancouver. The Conservative government said, "We think the section going through Kapuskasing is a connecting link to the town, and the taxpayers and property owners in the town of Kapuskasing should pay for this section of highway."

As a result, there are different standards. Even transport drivers, if you're talking to them in the winter months, are saying, "Where are the standards on these highways? We travel for 40 or 50 miles and the Minister of Transportation is looking after the roads and they're in one condition. Then as soon as we hit the towns there are different standards."

My explanation is very simple: You've got Mike Harris, who has dumped this on to the property owners along with paying for land ambulances, paying for the roads that have been dumped on them, paying for welfare

do something?" If the OMA is unable to come up with the doctors needed for the town of Kapuskasing, the Conservative government has a responsibility to make sure that people do not suffer because they live in northern Ontario. One of the doctors was saying that there is a two-tier health care system now, one for southern Ontario and one for northern Ontario, because no effort whatsoever is being made to deal with the issues in northern Ontario as far as doctors or health care are concerned. We have long distances that we have to travel.

I understand that this afternoon another time allocation motion was brought in on Bill 35, the Hydro bill, which is the privatization of Ontario Hydro through the back door. Consumers are going to pay higher rates if the stranded debt is not handled properly. The large corporations and industry are probably going to pay lower rates, but the rates. But they decided that they want to ram this one through the Legislature.

They brought in legislation on Bill 31. The titles of some of these bills are scary. It's An Act to promote economic development and create jobs in the construction industry, to further workplace democracy and to make other amendments to labour and employment statutes. Bill 31 is strictly another bill very similar to Bill 7, which was brought in during the first year of the Conservative government and made legal the use of strikebreakers, or scabs and busters, as we call the workers who go in and replace workers out on a legal strike. Now the employers are allowed to go out and hire the people that they feel are necessary and bring them through the picket lines with OPP officers or the police forces right across this province.

Bill 31 is going to cause nothing but problems in the construction industry. I'm sure that before the next election rolls around we'll probably see a province-wide strike in Ontario as the direct result of Mike Harris and the Minister of Labour deciding that they want to reduce the hourly rates of all the unionized workers in Ontario and giving the employers the right to bring in non-unionized workers along with the unionized workers. That's going to create nothing but problems in the workforce in the construction industry across this province.

There might be some aspects of the bill we're dealing with today — well, we're not actually dealing with the bill. We're dealing with the time allocation to make sure that the government can railroad Bill 25 through. But how can anybody be expected to digest 200 pages of amendments and changes that are being made to all of the acts? As I said before, instead of dealing with Bill 25, we should be dealing with some of the crisis situations out there. Northern Ontario has seen no benefits as far as job creation is concerned. Unemployment in most of the communities is around 15%, 18%, 20%. In some areas it's 25%. In some of the native reserve communities in most of the Moose Factory, Attawapiskat, Kashechewan and Peawanuck, Ogoki, it's at 85% or 90%. There's been nothing to create employment in any of these communities within my riding of Cochrane North.

and paying for the airports. The federal government got rid of all their federal airports and the province was subsidizing the airport in Cochrane and the airport in Hearst. As soon as the federal government got rid of the airports — Kapuskasing, for example, is now having to pay for the airport through property taxes. It's a continuous attack on them. Before I give my time to the member for Fort York and eventually the member for Cochrane South, I just want to raise once again, why is Bill 25 being time-allocated today? We have a muzzle being put on the opposition parties and time allocation that has to be voted on at 6 o'clock. The only reason this particular bill is being brought forward is to stop the opposition, especially the NDP — Howard Hampton was asking questions today to the Solicitor General — from asking more questions about what involvement Mike Harris and Chris Hodgson had in the wrongful death of an unarmed native at Ipperwash. That's the only reason we've got a time allocation motion here today. We have to get to the bottom of that. We're now going into four years of the Mike Harris government here, and they've done everything to try and stall and make sure that the NDP are is not going to get any answers to the questions.

As I said before, we've asked to bring this situation in front of four different committees and they've stalled and stonewalled on every occasion to make sure that we wouldn't get the answers and that the Dudley George family will not get the answers. I represent quite a few thousand natives in my riding and they are concerned, very concerned, and they're angry and frustrated about what happened. Why, for the first time in 100 years, would a Conservative government come to power and order the natives out of the park or the OPP to go in and, as a result, one unarmed person died? We have to get to the bottom of that and I'm sure we're eventually going to get to the bottom of that.

Concerning Bill 25, the only reason it's being debated here today and being put into committee in October is to try to stop us from getting questions or any public inquiry on that particular situation.

1720

Mr Marchese: There are a number of aspects I want to touch on with respect to this particular bill, but first I need to put something aside. A number of the members have made reference to my light blue suit. I want to say that I dress for style, whereas many of the members who wear blue on the other side dress for ideology. That blue there is connected to a Tory ideology kind of colour; this is style. I just thought I'd get that out of the way.

Interruptions.

The Acting Speaker: Get to the point; the motion.

Mr Marchese: Thank you, Speaker, for facilitating the discussion.

I wanted to add to some of the comments the member for Cochrane North made. It is true that this government has been behaving like many of the canine family — the German shepherd types, the Doberman types, the pit bull types — snapping at everybody in this entire province.

One of the things this Red Tape Reduction Act does is to repeal the policy and priorities board of cabinet. This policy and priorities board has six members of cabinet sitting there scrutinizing some of the issues that come before them. It's like another chamber of second thought, as it were. They decide basically on the priorities; it gets back to cabinet for discussion, and from time to time it

I'm not one who wants to spend too much time on these other little guys behind the scenes, because I know what power is. We were in power too at one point. I know that we had advisers and in the early years a few of our folks had tremendous power, very true, but eventually the Premier took control. Your Premier has exerted control over a period of time now. I would think by now he's firmly seated in his premiership and has of course exercised his power in a way that I think he wants. So the little guys, put them aside, stop talking about them and start talking about the leader.

From where power is centralized.

Mr Len Wood: The whiz kids?

Mr Marchese: Yes, the whiz kids and all that. They probably have a few good ideas, no doubt about that, but the real power is M. Harris, the Premier. We should not be deflecting our attention away from the big guy, and in mentioning these other little people behind the scenes, we give them undue attention and undue power. We distract ourselves from the real focus.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): For good reason.

I've got to tell you, every time they talk about Guy Giorno and Tom Long and others, it deflects the attention away from where power is centralized.

Mr Len Wood: The whiz kids?

Mr Marchese: They don't like it. They know there's something reprehensible about this whole thing, something lurking underneath the title, something that speaks to the true reality connected inside. While there may be things we will agree with, people also know that there's some stuff there that is likely to be hurting workers, consumers and ordinary citizens. People need to look at that.

A number of other folks have made reference to Mr Guy Giorno. Poor Guy Giorno. He's getting a beating from some of the members in this House.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): For good reason.

Look at this title, as is typical of this government: It's called the Red Tape Reduction Act. Speaker, doesn't that alert you to a particular problem of reverse reality connected to this title? It does for me. I know that everybody out there is catching on. As soon as they hear a title like Red Tape Reduction Act, they say: "Something gives here. Something is up. What gives?" I would.

Mr Beaubien: They love it.

Mr Marchese: They don't like it. They know there's something reprehensible about this whole thing, something lurking underneath the title, something that speaks to the true reality connected inside. While there may be things we will agree with, people also know that there's some stuff there that is likely to be hurting workers, consumers and ordinary citizens. People need to look at that.

from this government.

People of course are defending themselves as best they

again in this province.

There isn't one single soul they haven't touched or barked

gets back to caucus. But in this case, if you eliminate the policy and priorities board, what it does is to centralize power in the cesspool of the Premier's chamber. That's what happens: It centralizes power in the cesspool of the Premier's chamber alone. Why we need to do this I have no clear idea except that I think M. Harris, the Premier, has decided that he needs to exercise more control; so it appears. I don't know.

There is no good explanation these folks have provided as to why this should fall under the Red Tape Reduction Act. It bears me. Maybe some of the other whiz kids on this side of the chamber might have some thoughts on this matter, but I certainly don't know. None of them have commented on this particular measure. That's why I say we need to focus our attention on the focal point of power, and that's M. Harris.

This is a time allocation motion. Speaker, you've been sitting there listening to a lot of these time allocation motions. There have been eight so far, eight time allocation motions. That we in this House have had to deal with.

Mr Bisson: More than that. That's just in this session.

Mr Marchese: In this particular session. A number of people who have commented on this have already told us why time allocation is not a particularly useful or helpful thing for anybody. What it does is to make sure that the scrutiny that every bill should have is reduced by half at least. That is what they are doing. They are reducing —

Hon David Turbull (Minister without Portfolio): We learned it from you, Rosario, ad nauseam. **Mr Marchese:** Ad nauseam. M. Turbull, speaking of ad nauseam — no offence. When they were here —

Hon Mr Turbull: I'd never take offence with you, Rosario. **Mr Marchese:** No, I appreciate that. When you were on this side of the House, you seemed to have a lot of things to say about some of the things we did. It seemed repetitive at the time. You were particularly loud in those days. Now I find you're very calm. Government suits you so well. It has calmed you down a fair bit, at least in this chamber. I'm not sure about the behaviour in the whip's office.

Intjections. **The Acting Speaker:** Order. You're not holding a conversation now. **1730** **Mr Marchese:** I find him kinder in this House, not as loud as he used to be here. A fine voice he had, I tell you. Time allocation is a tool — and they use a lot of tools — designed to make sure that the scrutiny that is appropriate to every bill is diminished. That's what this is about, over and over again.

And you know what? They want to give this particular bill two weeks of hearings, as they did the Condominium Act; another two weeks on that particular bill, on the Condominium Act. Everybody says, "We don't think this is a serious type of bill that requires two weeks of debate and scrutiny," and this bill here, the red tape reduction bill, another two weeks of hearings. But on essential bills such as Bill 31, no hearings. On another essential bill,

Bill 36, changes to the Elections Act, no hearings. But on this, two weeks.

I ruminate often on the politics of this government, on the strategies of this government. We articulate as best we can what we believe the politics of this government are all about. It's done for the purposes of speaking to the people who are watching this channel — no one else, really. We need to let them know that essential bills around which there are fundamental differences are getting no hearings, and bills that have very little debate attached to them are going to get weeks of hearings. Not only that, but this particular bill, as the member for Cochrane North has talked about, is going to the justice committee, where we are trying to deal with the matter of Ipperwash. This government has a stranglehold on what happens in this place.

The member for Simcoe Centre said red tape has a stranglehold on our economy. I tell you, Mike Harris, the Premier, has a stranglehold on this place, and they have a stranglehold on their members, as they do the opposition parties.

When they decide to introduce red tape so as not to permit this House to discuss Ipperwash under section 124, which permits us to have 12 hours of debate, when they introduce their red tape so as to prevent us from scrutinizing, from debating, from getting to the issue that is very important to many not just aboriginal people, but many concerned as to what happened to Dudley George. His death is something that has been raised in this House repeatedly by our leader and other New Democrats, but this government has been stalling for the longest of time. They want this issue to fade away. The way they want to deal with this issue is that it come back, if they want it to, in the next election, but not now.

Talk about red tape, therefore, to me seems inconsistent. It seems contradictory that they would on the one hand give two weeks of hearings on one non-controversial issue and no hearings on another issue that has a great deal of controversy.

For me, it brings many questions that we are trying to raise in this House. We do our best to say to the public that if you find what this government does as offensive as members, because if you don't, they will assume that your silence is support. They do this often, on many issues.

The member for Simcoe Centre talked about how this government knows how to manage the economy, they know how to deal with the economy, something that obviously we as New Democrats didn't know how to do. These people have gotten the economy under control because of their expertise in economics.

They have cut billions of dollars from essential services in this province. They are health, education, environment, labour protections, cultural cuts that have affected all of value. We're talking billions.

It isn't something that some of us dream up. There was in the Globe an article that says: "Ontario Spending

Claims Not True, Group Says: Analysis of Tory Budgets

Shows Deep Cuts, Misleading Accounting."

Tory politics as it relates to corporate power in this province, and they do that well. There's no doubt about that. But the billions they have taken out of our economy is hurting us all, not helping. The \$5 billion of which goes to 6% away in income tax cuts, \$2 billion of which goes to 6% of their buddies, is hurting this economy. They're spending more than New Democrats were before. At the same time, they're saying they're spending less.

It's an oxymoron. It's certainly paradoxical that they want it both ways, usually it's Liberals. Liberals usually want it both ways, an elastic kind of politics. But in this instance Tories want it both ways. They're saying: "Oh, no, we're cutting. We're the real cutters." On the other hand, they say: "No, we're spending more than the others. Look at our health budget. Look at our education budget. We're spending more." Do you see how that is contradictory? You can't have it both ways.

They have spent more than New Democrats. It's not because they're putting money into programs; it's because the income tax cut is adding a big debt to our spending. That is what is causing this kind of budget problem we're all facing. The fact that we have to borrow five billion bucks means this government is spending more than any other government before them. Then they say they're good managers of money.

That's why we say to the people that we need to expose contradictions, those oxymorons, break it down in such a way that people out there are able to formulate an opinion as to where the enemy is, because Tories will continue to say the enemy is on this side, that they're okay, that they're managing the economy well. As the member for Cochrane North said, they've got nothing to do with the economy. We are lucky that the US is doing well and all of that trickles down to poor little Canada. If it wasn't for that, these Tories would be in as bad shape as the rest, both Liberals and New Democrats.

Interjections

Mr Marchese: Oh, please, come on. How else would you explain that the Liberals at the federal level are doing as well as they are? How would you explain it?

Mr Cullen: Better: 56%.

Mr Marchese: Oh, they're better managers at the federal level? The Liberals are performing as well as you. Why? Because they are creating a better climate, like you? Or is it because, of course, the US is doing well and we fortunate little Homo sapiens here in Canada are doing better because of those other conditions that come as a result of that kind of an economy. A good economy brings bucks in. When we had a recession from 1990 to 1995, New Democrats got whacked seriously. Not because of our policy —

Laughter

Mr Marchese: Oh, they laugh. Let them smile. It's part of the game. It's part of politics here. Nothing to do with the politics of New Democrats; a whole lot to do with a world economy that was collapsing all around us. In

Mr Marchese: Mr Jackson, please, take a couple of minutes to speak to this. I know that not everyone is an economist in this place, or out there, but if Liberals are doing as well as the Tories, it isn't because of your politics but because the US is doing well. Trust me on this. There are things to add. The member for Cochrane North has touched on some of these issues. I've touched on others and I know my friend and colleague the member for Cochrane South would like to add some of his observations to this bill, so I will pass that on.

1740

Mr Bission: We're speaking today on the red tape bill, and I think the comments made by both the members for Fort York and Cochrane North, when they talk about the economy, were bang on. The government is trying to make people believe that all of these initiatives they have, like this red tape bill and other bills they have had, somehow have created the economic boom in the province of Ontario.

But you know, there's a problem with that. As was pointed out earlier, if you look at what's really going on in the North American economy, the American economy has been doing extremely well, for a number of reasons. Because Ontario happens to export a lot of its products into the United States, and because most of those goods are produced here in Ontario, it only stands to reason that the Ontario economy has done fairly well.

For the government members to come into this House and say: "Well, you know, it's because we introduced the red tape bill. Boy oh boy, the economy in Ontario is doing much better because of that. We're entirely responsible for the economic boom that we've had in Ontario," I think is a stretch. I think it's more than a stretch. I can't say what I think it is in this House because it would be unparliamentary. But the reality is, what has happened here in Ontario is that we've been seeing the effects of what's happened in the American economy, just as we saw in the 1990s.

At the end of 1989-90 when the Ontario economy went into a slide, it was why? It wasn't because Bob Rae got elected to government. It was because of what we saw within the American economy. There was an overall slowing of the economy, and what ended up happening is that the demand for manufactured goods from Ontario went down from the United States. Basically what we saw was the slowing of the economy because of what we saw in the United States.

The other point I want to make is, I was fortunate last Friday to be in the city of Timmins when the Premier came to Timmins. He was at the Timmins underground gold mine tour to announce some \$5 million that is going to be earmarked by the heritage fund —

Mr Len Wood: Trying to buy votes.

Mr Bisson: — I'm coming to this point — in order to put into place a tourism strategy to try to attract people from the United States and Europe into northern Ontario when it comes to tourism destinations. I think that's a good thing. I don't think there's any problem with what they announced.

But I was really a bit taken aback by a couple of the comments the Premier made at the time, and I thought, "No, I'm not going to respond to those comments while he's in Timmins announcing what is good news," because whenever the Premier comes to Timmins and wants to say something positive, we encourage him to do that and we'll give him the respect he deserves. But I want to bring back something that he said because it was raised again here in the House just a little while ago. That's this whole notion that since 1995, Ontario's economy has gotten better because of Mike Harris.

Mr Harris was in Timmins the other day and he said, "Soon Ontario will be number one," when it comes to the number one place in the world to live. Where have you guys been? The United Nations as far back as 1993 was saying the best place in the world to live is where? Good old Canada, and good old province of Ontario. In Welland

Mr Len Wood: And booming Kapuskasing.

Mr Bisson: — and booming Kapuskasing. But I'm

getting off topic.

The point that I make is, the government has tried to paint this picture that they're somehow responsible for everything that's good in Ontario and take absolutely no responsibility for what is bad in the province.

I just want to remind people that in 1993, Canada was chosen as the number one place in the world to live by the United Nations. Why? Because we had built up over a period of years, through our provinces and through the federal government, a system, a social safety net, as we call it, that was second to none across the world. We recognized that our communities were safe, that we had healthy communities and we had a healthy nation to live in. That's why they chose Canada as the number one place to live.

You know what else happened in 1993, 1994 and 1995? Ontario's economy outpaced all of Canada and the G-7. Who was in power then? Bob Rae was in power, the NDP government. My lord. The government is trying to make us believe that somehow the economy only picked up after 1995. I use that to make the point that Ontario's economy is very much linked to what happens in the United States. We benefited, the Bob Rae government, by what happened within the United States when the economy started to pick up again at the end of 1993 and into 1994 and 1995. That was reflected in the overall economic gains that were made in the province of Ontario.

It's interesting to note that as I was flying down from Timmins earlier this afternoon on the Air Ontario flight, I was reading a financial report — I forget which financial analyst it was — and they were speaking about our mutual funds, for those of us who are lucky enough to invest in mutual funds, which happens to be most members of this

assembly because of all kinds of reasons we can get into later, what would be good places to invest in for the following year when it came to mutual funds.

One of the things they went on to talk about at fairly great length is how Ontario's economy would do much better if it weren't for all the cuts this government has made; that the cuts made by the Harris government to the broader public sector, as well as the public sector itself, directly for the province and the programs they support, has slowed the Ontario economy. The point they were making is that if the government had not done that, Ontario's economy probably would have been stronger.

I don't pretend for one second those are all the problems we had in Ontario, but they were part of it. So for this government to somehow argue that they are responsible for all of this is quite something else.

We talk about red tape. The government said, "We need red tape bills to do positive things in Ontario." Let's talk about some of the red tape this government is dealing with, both by way of initiative through government policies and by way of red tape bills as well. I picked up a copy of the Timmins Daily Press, and I think it's actually today's paper, June 23. This is the kind of news that we read every day now in Ontario because of the Mike Harris government. Do you know what economic development in northern Ontario has come down to? "Kirikland Lake Garbage Plans Giant Boost for Railways." Under the Mike Harris government, our only economic boom in northern Ontario in three years is what? It's this government saying, "We're going to make money by taking Toronto's garbage into northern Ontario."

I want to be on the record as saying I'm opposed to the project. I was opposed to it when we were in government. My guess is that by the time the appraisal process goes through, this government will be out of power and we'll never go ahead with this particular project.

I don't want to get into a debate about the Adams mine proposal, but the point I make is this: The government takes this attitude that the private sector has got to do everything, that we cannot as a government intervene in the economy in any way. We see McDonnell Douglas going down in the city of Toronto, over 3,000 jobs. We have Minister Palladini getting up and saying: "We shouldn't do anything. We have to allow the private sector to do these things." It's only 3,000 jobs; 3,000 jobs gone here, 3,000 jobs gone back over a year. The reality is this government has a laissez-faire approach when it comes to seeing the effects of that because we are not seeing the economic development that we saw during the early 1990s and into about 1996 in northern Ontario.

Everything that we saw happening that was positive, such as the expansion of the TMP plant in Iroquois Falls, the building of a co-gen station in Iroquois Falls, the expansion of the waterboard mill in Timmins, the building of brand-new greenfield mills across the area of northern Ontario, the Dome superpit expansion — over half a billion dollars of private sector investment was invested in my riding alone between the years 1993 and 1996. Why?

What she's referring to is the huge colour picture that the Daily Press ran of Mike Harris. I don't criticize the Daily Press for running the picture because the Premier came to town and he gave —

Interjections:

Mr Bisson: I'm trying to give you guys some credit here. The Premier came to town and he gave us some good news and the Daily Press, rightfully so, put an article in, a great big picture of Mike Harris on the front page, about what he had done. But the thing that's interesting is that a whole bunch of people reacted the same way. Here's the Premier coming in from Toronto to try to announce something good and the reaction by most of the people in the community was: "Why did he come? Is he trying to buy the election?" I had never seen people so upset with the Premier coming to announce money.

When Premier Rae or Premier Peterson or Premier Davis came to town, people said: "Oh, the Premier is coming to see us. Oh, this is exciting." They let the people know that the Premier was coming to Timmins less than 24 hours before he actually came because they were worried there were going to be protests at this particular chamber of commerce, good friends of Mike Harris and the Conservatives, didn't find out until the day before the actual announcement was going to be made because they were worried that people were going to go out and protest.

As I went through the riding on Saturday and Sunday, I never heard so many people say to me: "Gilles, is this guy really — it's unbelievable. He's been cutting us to death for the last three years. We're seeing our health care go to heck in a handbasket. We're seeing education cut to the point where we really worry about the quality of education for our children and the future of our children, which is the strength of our economy and the strength of our communities. And this Premier, my Lord, has the gall to come to Timmins and try to buy our votes." "It ain't gonna work," they said. It's not me who said that; it's the people in the city of Timmins.

Please go to the Timmins Daily Press Web site — they're on there — and read Lucie Minard's article. I'm not going to read the entire thing, but it's really quite to the point. What she's saying is that this guy basically has cut everything in sight for the last three years. "He's attacked our health care system. He's attacked education. He's attacked everything that's near and dear to us in our community and I really get upset," she says, "when I look at this man's picture on the paper with this smirk." She really gets upset, and I think it's an interesting one to read. The other thing that was in the paper which I think is also very much in keeping with what we're debating here today when it comes to Bill 25 — there was another event that was reported in the paper. It's like it's bad news every day that we pick up the paper these days. The city of Timmins fire department and the volunteer crew were out all day Sunday, and they were going up one street and down the other street across the city of Timmins. Why? They were going out to pick food up for our food bank.

Why? Because we have never had a demand such as we have going out to pick food up for our food bank. They were going out to pick food up for our food bank. Why? Because we have never had a demand such as we have going out to pick food up for our food bank.

Because our government, the NDP government — yes, Bob Rae — was at the table with the private sector saying: "Let's find ways to work together. Let's find ways how government can be helpful in creating economic opportunities for the private sector so that our community can benefit."

This government's approach is: "We'll introduce a bill, we'll cut all the red tape and everything will be fine. Red tape? No problem. The government is just going to back off and the private sector is going to invent everything on its own and we'll just let them be. Everything will be fine." It doesn't work, that's the problem. When I look across northern Ontario, the place that I come from, I see no economic development happening whatsoever. We see the mines across northern Ontario basically dwindling, part of it because of commodity prices, but also because the confidence there used to be in the mining sector, because of the active role the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines and others used to play, is just not there any more.

Don't believe me. Read the Timmins Daily Press, today's issue. Now we have, "Lands for Life Derailed, Members Say." Everybody in northern Ontario, the mining sector, the forestry sector, environmentalists, municipalities, tourists, anglers, hunters, local politicians, all have one thing in common. They're saying: "This is nuts. You are going to put a stranglehold on the economy of northern Ontario on the basis of you guys trying to make yourselves look as if you're environmentally conscious for some people in southern Ontario." People in northern Ontario are as environmentally conscious as anybody else, but they're saying, "We have to have a process that works and we have to have something that in the end is going to come to some results that are positive." But this government, no. Everything that they touch is the inverted Midas approach.

I was talking a little while ago about how Premier Harris came to the riding of Cochrane South, to Timmins, last week. I was there. It was a very positive thing. He didn't invite me; I just showed up. I thought it was a good thing. No, actually he did invite me. I shouldn't say that. Mr Harris did call my office and I did go, and I appreciate the call.

I was at the airport this morning and my father pointed out to me that there was an article I should read in the Timmins Daily Press on the editorial page. It's quite interesting. It's a letter written by Lucie Minard, a local resident of the city of Timmins, and it reads as follows: "Harris Spoils Saturday Morning." I think it's quite a telling thing. It goes on like this:

"The sun is shining, the birds are chirping, the aroma of coffee fills the room, everyone is sleeping. I pick up my Daily Press to enjoy the solitude of a peaceful new morning...the dawn of another week....How I wish my newspaper carrier had been late delivering his bundle of bad news.... Could the Daily Press have put a bigger colour picture that lay on my kitchen table almost all day, this face staring back at me with that annoying smirk?"

have now with people in our community in the city of Timmins, as across the riding in places like Hearst and Kapuskasing and everywhere else who have a need for the food bank.

The food bank, not more than about two weeks ago, announced in our community that, given the situation of the demand that has been put on the food bank, they would have to close their doors. That's even though they're being funded by the United Way of the city of Timmins. The total funding that they get with the demand that they're now getting only allows them food enough to operate for about three months.

Thank the Lord that our friends at the volunteer fire department, the good people in the fire department, decided to take things in hand. They went across the city of Timmins and picked up loads and loads of food and they picked up more food on the weekend. I want to thank the needy people in our community. They picked up over 11 tonnes of food, and I want to thank the fire department for what they did with the volunteers.

Mr Len Wood: That's in the Timmins-James Bay riding.

Mr Bission: In the Timmins-James Bay riding. But the point I make is this: We would never have seen that kind of activity not more than three years ago. Red tape? The effect of red tape is that we're seeing people go hungry in our community, something we've never seen before. In the four minutes I have left I also want to speak about another red tape item that this government snuck on us about two years ago, and I just found out about this one even though most of us read the bill, and that's some of the changes the government made to the Labour Relations Act.

Some of you may know that Abitibi-Price is out on strike and they have been for about a week, a little bit more than a week now. As we know, the Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada has, as do other unions, a system of pattern bargaining. They pick a pattern and they pick an employer they will negotiate the pattern with, in this case Abitibi. The union then sits down with all the mills that are owned by Abitibi and they negotiate one central agreement with the company, which would be basically the pattern. Once the pattern is set, they go out across the system. That system has seen some of the best working conditions and some of the best wages and benefits of any industry, bar none. The Paperworkers have a lot to be proud of because they developed the system of pattern bargaining that has worked to the benefit of the workers.

This government with one stroke of the pen two years ago decided to change the process. The Conservative member across the way smiles with great fanfare. He thinks this is a good thing. Go tell that to the guys on the picket line in Iroquois Falls and across this great province, because your government is trying to make it illegal for those people to negotiate by way of a pattern. What you're doing is undermining the collective authority, undermining

You say it's innocuous. You say red tape is nothing. Well, what's happening in Iroquois Falls, as across all other Abitibi mills in the system, is that your government is saying that it's illegal to negotiate a pattern. Well, excuse me. I'll make up the same rules for the corporate sector. It's illegal for corporations to come together by any way of amalgamation and become larger entities. How would you like that? You'd say it's unconstitutional. You'd say: "That's heresy. You have to allow the corporate rate sector to do these things so they can grow and become bigger and do better and have more efficiencies." Why is it good for the private sector to have efficiencies but it's not good for the working people of Ontario to have some efficiencies, when it comes to bargaining, so that they themselves can have a fair collective agreement?

I'll tell you, I understand why you guys do it. Some people may not but it's a really simple thing. You guys have made a choice. You're on the side of large business, not small business. I believe the small business sector is hurting because of this government, and you've said, "To heck with the working people of this province." I'll tell you, the economy gets hurt in the long run if people don't have the ability to negotiate fair collective agreements. Good purchasing power is what makes an economy run over the long run.

You guys on the other side can smirk all you want and you can feel proud about what you're doing to the working people in the town of Iroquois Falls and to other Abitibi workers across the province, but you will rue the day. I'll tell you as I stand here, when the NDP forms a government again, and we will, this NDP government will turn back the clock on the stuff you've done, bring back democracy to the people of this province and make sure that we have rules when it comes to labour laws that are not one-sided but basically say that employees have the right to free collective bargaining and have the right to negotiate fair collective agreements. We will take off the restrictions you're trying to put on them.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Sterling has moved government notice of motion number 24. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members; this will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1801 to 1806.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time.

Ayes

Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Beaubien, Marcel
Boushy, Dave
Brown, Jim
Carr, Gary
Clement, Tony
Cunningham, Dianne
Danford, Harry
Doyle, Ed
Leach, Al
Kieles, Frank
Kieles, Morley
Jordan, W. Leo
Johnson, David
Johnson, Bert
Johnson, Helen
Jackson, Cameron
Hastings, John
Harmick, Charles
Holins, E.J. Douglas
Ross, Lillian
Runciman, Robert W.
Sampson, Rob
Saunderson, William
Sheehan, Frank
Skarica, Toni
Smith, Bruce
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tison, David
Turnbull, David
Vankoughnet, Bill
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Wilmer, Elizabeth
Wood, Bob
Young, Terence H.

Nays

Bartolucci, Rick
Bisson, Gilles
Boyd, Manon
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Michael A.
Caplan, David
Churley, Marilyn
Cleary, John C.
Colle, Mike
Cordiano, Joseph
Cullen, Alex
Duncan, Dwight
Gerretsen, John
Grandmaitre, Bernard
Gravelle, Michael
Kornos, Peter
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Lessard, Wayne
Marchese, Rosano
McLeod, Lyn
Midash, Frank
Patten, Richard
Ruprecht, Tony
Sergio, Mano
Wildman, Bud
Wood, Len

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 59; the nays are 27.
The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
It now being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:30.

The House adjourned at 1809.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will rise one at a time.

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

[illegible]

Constituency	Member/Party	Constituency	Member/Party
Mississauga West / -Ouest	Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC)	St Catharines-Brock	Freese, Tom (PC)
	Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)	St George-St David	Leach, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
	Barid, John R. (PC)	Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Boushy, Dave (PC)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)		
Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Martin, Tony (ND)
Nipissing	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC)	Scarborough-Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)
	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif	Scarborough-East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Scarborough-Eglwastown	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)
Norfolk		Scarborough-North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Northumberland	Gall, Doug (PC)	Scarborough-West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Oakville South / -Sud	Car, Gary (PC)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Oakwood	Collie, Mike (L)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Orono	Caplan, David (L)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)		Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa East / -Est	Grandmaître, Bernard (L)	Sudbury East / -Est	Marcel, Shelley (ND)
Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Gary J. (PC)	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinly, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Victoria-Haliburton	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)
Ottawa West / -Ouest	Cullen, Alex (L)		Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Chair of the Management Board of Canada / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines, président du Conseil de gestion
Parkeville	Raprech, Tony (L)	Waterloo North / -Nord	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC)
Party Sound	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC)		Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
	Depuy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Welland-Thorold	Kornos, Peter (ND)
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Pictororough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Ed (PC)
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
Prince Edward-Lennox-Prince Edward-Lennox-	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Willowdale	Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC)
Prince Edward-Lennox-			Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Quinte	Fox, Gary (PC)	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Rainy River	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Windsor-Riverside	Lessard, Wayne (ND)
	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	Windsor-Walkerville	Puparella, Sandra (L)
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	York Centre / -Centre	Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC)
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)		Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Commerce et du Tourisme
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble (PC)	York East / -Est	Parker, John L. (PC)
	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	York Mills	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC)
St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Hon / L'hon Isabel (PC)	York-Mackenzie	Kiecs, Frank (PC)
	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires culturelles, de la Culture et des Loisirs	Yorkview	Scrago, Mario (L)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)
			Vacant

CONTENTS

Tuesday 23 June 1998

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 23 juin 1998

DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste

M. Grandmaître..... 1743

Peel District School Board

Mr Hampton..... 1752
Mr David Johnson..... 1753
Mr Silipo..... 1753

PETITIONS

Electoral reform
Mr Bradley..... 1753

Abortion

Mr Stewart..... 1754
Mrs Fisher..... 1756

Hospital restructuring

Mr Gravelle..... 1754

Compensation for hepatitis C patients

Mr Tascona..... 1754

Adoption

Mr Cullen..... 1754

Health care

Mr Danford..... 1754

Protection for health care workers

Mr Ruprecht..... 1754
Mr Tilson..... 1755
Mr Bob Wood..... 1755

Nurses' bill of rights

Mr Gravelle..... 1755

Rent regulation

Mr Ruprecht..... 1755

Road safety

Mr Cullen..... 1756

School custodian

Mr Barrett..... 1756

Charitable gaming

Mr Bradley..... 1756

Adult entertainment parlour

Mr Baird..... 1756

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Time allocation, government notice of motion number 24, Mr Sterling

Mr Sterling..... 1757
Mrs Ross..... 1757
Mr Beaubien..... 1759
Mr Tascona..... 1760
Mr Bradley..... 1765
Mr Colle..... 1769
Mr Len Wood..... 1773
Mr Marchese..... 1775
Mr Bisson..... 1777
Agreed to..... 1781

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Algoma Ore division, Wawa
Mr Wildman..... 1743

Youth Assisting Youth

Mr Sanderson..... 1743

Goldcorp strike

Mr Michalsch..... 1743

Property taxation

Mr Kormos..... 1744

International plowing match

Mr Vankoughnet..... 1744

Cabinet members

Mr Duncan..... 1744

Children's aid societies

Ms Lankin..... 1745

Saugen District Secondary School senior band

Mrs Fisher..... 1745

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ippeewash Provincial Park

Mr Phillips..... 1745
Mr Flaherty..... 1745, 1747
Mr Hampton..... 1747

Respite care

Mr McGuinly..... 1746
Mrs Wilmer..... 1746

Ontario Hydro

Mr Hampton..... 1748
Mr Eves..... 1748

Hospital services

Mr Phillips..... 1748
Mrs Wilmer..... 1748

Children's aid societies

Ms Lankin..... 1749
Mrs Marland..... 1749

Arts and cultural funding

Mrs Munro..... 1750
Ms Bassett..... 1750

Education funding

Mr Caplan..... 1750
Mr David Johnson..... 1750

Native housing

Mr Marchese..... 1751
Ms Bassett..... 1751

Children's nutrition

Mr Weillauer..... 1751
Mrs Marland..... 1751

GO Transit

Mr Cordiano..... 1752
Mr Clement..... 1752



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 36^e législature

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Tuesday 23 June 1998

Mardi 23 juin 1998



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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ASSEMBLÉE LEGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 23 juin 1998

Tuesday 23 June 1998

The House met at 1829.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 SUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE ET SUR LA DÉMOCRATIE EN MILIEU DE TRAVAIL

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 31, An Act to promote economic development and create jobs in the construction industry, to further workplace democracy and to make other amendments to labour and employment statutes / Projet de loi 31, Loi visant à promouvoir le développement économique et à créer des emplois dans l'industrie de la construction, favorisant la démocratie en milieu de travail et apportant d'autres modifications aux lois ayant trait au travail et à l'emploi.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 18, 1998, I am now required to put the question.

Mr Flaherty has moved second reading of Bill 31. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye." In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The division bells rang from 1830 to 1835.

The Deputy Speaker: Members, take your seats, please.

All those in favour of the bill will please rise.

Ayes

Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Bassett, Isabel
Beaudin, Marcel
Boushy, Dave
Brown, Jim
Carr, Gary
Clement, Tony
Cunningham, Diane
Dartford, Harry
Doye, Ed
Elliott, Brenda
Fisher, Barbara
Leach, Al
Klees, Frank
Kells, Morley
Jordan, W. Leo
Johnson, David
Johnson, Bert
Johns, Helen
Jackson, Cameron
Hastings, John
Harris, Michael D.
Harms, Charles
Guzzo, Gary J.
Grimmett, Bill
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Parker, John L.
Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Runciman, Robert W.
Sampson, Rob
Saunderson, William
Sheehan, Frank
Smith, Bruce
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Tascona, Joseph N.

Nays

Duncan, Dwight
Gerretsen, John
Grandmaître, Bernard
Gravelle, Michael
Hoy, Pat
Kaplan, David
Ciaray, John C.
Colle, Mike
Cordiano, Joseph
Cullen, Alex
Marchese, Rosario
McGuinty, Dalton
Lessard, Wayne
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Komos, Peter
Pupatello, Sandra
Patten, Richard
Morrin, Gilles E.
Mitlash, Frank
McLeod, Lyn
Wood, Len
Wildman, Bud
Sergio, Mano
Ruprecht, Tony
Ramsay, David

Flaherty, Jim
Ford, Douglas B.
Fox, Gary
Freese, Tom
Galt, Doug
Gilchrist, Steve
Newman, Dan
McLean, Allan K.
Maves, Bart
Maves, Margaret
Munro, Julia
Murdoch, Bill
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wood, Bob

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please rise.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): The ayes are 57, the nays are 30.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 18, 1998, the bill is ordered for third reading, to be considered immediately.

Mr Flaherty moved third reading of the following bill: Bill 31, An Act to promote economic development and create jobs in the construction industry, to further workplace democracy and to make other amendments to labour and employment statutes / Projet de loi 31, Loi visant à promouvoir le développement économique et à créer des emplois dans l'industrie de la construction, favorisant la démocratie en milieu de travail et apportant d'autres modifications aux lois ayant trait au travail et à l'emploi.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour, Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): I understand that all three parties have agreed that we would split the time evenly.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): On a point of order, Speaker: I'm sure the government is mistaken, that they wanted to send this to committee, so I will ask for unanimous consent that we revert the bill back to the committee stage and allow public hearings for two weeks. **The Deputy Speaker:** Agreed? No.

Is there consent to split the time equally between the three parties? Agreed. Minister.

Hon Mr Flaherty: Thank you, Speaker. I propose to share my time with the member for Niagara Falls, the member for Lambton and the member for Samia.

On June 4, I introduced the Economic Development and Workplace Democracy Act. You will recall that this important job creating legislation would accomplish three key things. First of all, as promised in the April 23 speech from the throne, Bill 31 amends labour legislation, particularly as it affects the construction industry, in order to attract investment and create jobs. The bill would do that by creating a framework for unions and employers to develop major project agreements. These are agreements that will create thousands of unionized construction jobs and long-term, permanent employment for Ontario's skilled workers.

Second, Bill 31 would continue this government's record of putting common sense back into the business of government by ensuring that only construction industry employers need to be considered under the special construction provisions of the Labour Relations Act. That means employers who are not primarily in the construction business, like some school boards, municipalities and retail firms, would not have to be regulated by the special construction provisions of the Labour Relations Act.

Third, the Economic Development and Workplace Democracy Act would guarantee that the union certification process is democratic and that the will of the majority of workers prevails at all times.

Let me elaborate on these three principal aspects of the bill.

For the past three weeks I have been telling members of this House, the public, the media and everyone interested in attracting investment and creating jobs in Ontario why this government is so supportive of this proposed legislation. But let me tell the members of this House once again why the Economic Development and Workplace Democracy Act is an important piece of the government's plan to create jobs and attract investment in Ontario.

The Canadian Chemical Producers' Association has estimated the potential of 42,500 new jobs in the petrochemical industry alone. Bill 31 would allow Ontario to seriously compete for those jobs. It would clear the way for the private sector to work with Ontario's trade unions to build Ontario's infrastructure, to add to Ontario's strong industrial base and to create lasting employment right here in Ontario. What kinds of jobs am I talking about? Well-paid unionized construction jobs for a start, and once those factories and plants have been built and the construction workers have moved on to new projects, then the well-paying permanent jobs begin. Then those jobs are followed by thousands of spinoff jobs, the kinds of jobs that are fuelled by the entrepreneurial spirit of Ontarians, the kinds of jobs that create strong, vibrant Ontario communities.

Interjection.

It is important to note that Bill 31 does not impose project agreements on unions and employers. It does not dictate the terms of any agreement or any deal to be negotiated. Instead, it sets up a framework where the potential owner of the project can negotiate with the appropriate local unions. For each tailor-made project to become a reality, it requires approval from 60% of all the relevant

negotiation between project proponents and unions. This is an act that also encourages fair trade union jobs. What Bill 31 does is put Ontario in the running for dozens of job-creating, multimillion-dollar industrial projects. It takes projects off the drawing board and puts shovels in the ground. It creates well-paid jobs for thousands of Ontario's skilled workers and many of those jobs are union jobs.

Again reading from yesterday's letter to the editor from the Canadian Chemical Producers' Association, "Some \$50 billion of new money is being invested in chemical manufacturing projects throughout North America, yet virtually no new investment is finding its way to Ontario." Fifty billion dollars is a lot of money and a lot of jobs and a lot of prosperity for this province. Ontario has the skilled and educated workforce, the transportation infrastructure, and the proximity to international markets and the entrepreneurial spirit to compete with the best in the world. But in this particular area we have a missing factor, and that is competitive construction costs. This bill will set the framework so that negotiations can lead to project agreements and competitive construction costs.

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For example, let us look at some concrete examples of the kinds of multimillion-dollar investments I am talking about. On June 4, the same day this bill was introduced, Bayer Rubber Inc announced a \$300-million expansion of its synthetic rubber unit in Sarnia. As their senior vice-president and site manager has said about Bill 31, it "removes the final impediment that will help us attract more international investment."

Then there is Dow Chemical's multimillion-dollar product development plant, which is the first new facility that Dow has built in Sarnia in 24 years. It will create jobs for 400 skilled unionized construction workers over the course of three years and will be home to many permanent jobs in the resulting workplace. While this is an important facility for the Sarnia area, it is small in comparison to the facilities that Dow Sarnia could compete for if Bill 31 is passed by this House.

In a letter published in yesterday's Toronto Star, Mr. Richard Paton, the president and CEO of the Canadian Chemical Producers' Association, wrote, and I quote, "The government of Ontario is opening the doors to a potential \$2.5 billion to \$5 billion in new investment in the chemical and refining industries." He goes on to say that the Economic Development and Workplace Democracy Act will create investment opportunities, not only for the chemical sector but for all manufacturers.

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non-union tradesmen... we ask no special treatment, just an open competitive bidding process."

"There are many more letters from all over Ontario but they all suggest the same thing, namely, that it is only right for taxpayers, for small business people and for the non-union construction employers themselves to implement the changes proposed in Bill 31.

In my final few minutes I want to address an important part of this bill. It deals with ensuring workplace democracy in Ontario. The simple fact is that, first, each worker should have the right to vote on whether or not to join a union. Second, the wishes of the majority must be paramount. Up to this point, that has not been the case in Ontario. Specifically, automatic certification, for all its good intentions, does not ensure that the workers' wishes are both sought and respected at all times.

Let me clear. As Minister of Labour, I am firmly opposed to any misconduct during the union certification process. If either side, employer or union, engages in any inappropriate behaviour during the union certification process, the Ontario Labour Relations Board has the powers necessary to level the playing field. Then, and only then, will the OLRB call another vote.

But the key point in this debate is that a vote must take place and the wishes of the majority must be respected. I do not believe that misconduct from any third party, either union or management, should take away an employee's right to vote whether or not to be represented by a union.

Workers' democratic rights must be supported by Ontario's labour laws. These amendments ensure that each employee's vote is respected. Bill 31 also sends the message to all investors that workplace democracy is in place in Ontario and that this democratic spirit is part of our openness to business and investment. Stability and certainty in Ontario's labour laws, as we all know, are good for job creation.

A final word to our critics: They say that Bill 31 is a gift to our supporters. Let me say, the supporters of this government include anyone who wants to continue improving this province's competitive position and anyone who believes in the principles of workplace democracy. Our supporters, in other words, are all Ontarians who want to draw investment and jobs to their communities. If Bill 31 is a gift to them, then it deserves the approval of all members of this Legislature.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): I congratulate the minister on his opening speech and I would like to add a few things to that. One of the things I would like to start off with is to talk about the number of meetings and consultations that our minister and our ministry had leading up to this point. They were extensive. They lasted for over a year.

For instance on June 10, 1996, in Sarnia the Ministry of Labour mediation staff met with Bayer chemical and local building trade unions. July 1996 to January 1997 in Toronto, the ministry continually met with the petrochemical companies, building trade unions and union construction contractors. April 4, 1997 in Toronto, the

unions involved. What could be more fair than that? Unions get good jobs; companies gain the flexibility to bid on major industrial projects armed with a workable, cost-effective project agreement; and Ontario can compete for the multibillion-dollar investments that are passing us by today, every day we delay the passage of Bill 31.

Let me move on to the non-construction employer aspects of this bill. Currently, a whole range of non-construction employers are bound by the province-wide provisions of the Labour Relations Act. Just because they once hired a unionized construction worker — it could be something as simple as hiring someone to build a canteen in a high school cafeteria — this has meant that many retail employers, municipalities and school boards have ended up covered by the complex provisions of province-wide construction agreements. This is manifestly unfair since, unlike the true construction employers, these companies have little opportunity to influence the agreements they are tied to. That unfairness is compounded by the fact that these employers cannot tender work to non-union contractors, many of whom are small business operators in all our communities.

Common sense says this should be changed and Bill 31 would do that. The bill does not exempt those employers from the Labour Relations Act. It just treats them the same as other employers in the province. We think this is a fair solution for a problem that has been around for a long time.

But this is an act that also benefits small business employers even as it benefits taxpayers. Small and medium-sized construction companies, many of them highly specialized firms, could bid on public construction contracts let by school boards and municipalities. I think you know what would happen if the tendering process were opened to all who can bid and control work. Competition would increase. Public sector project costs would drop. Taxpayers would benefit.

Who are those small businesses that are waiting anxiously for the passage of Bill 31? Let me read some of the letters I have received over the past few weeks. One small businessman from the Hamilton area writes:

"Our company employs 25 skilled tradesmen who have chosen to belong to an independent union... because of their choice of representation [they] have been prevented from working on many public sector projects. As well, private companies whose main line of endeavour is not construction have been prevented from hiring us as suppliers of construction services. Your bill goes a long way in redressing these wrongs."

Here's another letter, from a specialty sewage and water treatment contractor:

"We employ 20 to 30 persons... we appreciate your stance on who can participate in public sector bidding and subsequent works."

Here's another letter from a firm in the greater Toronto area:

"I represent a non-union mechanical contracting company entering its 23rd year in Ontario. We employ 50

the framework. It doesn't impose anything except that it sets up a framework that unions can enter into with building proponents to build all kinds of projects. As the minister has said, over \$5 billion in investment in the petrochemical industry alone is just waiting to happen in Ontario, and we need a shot at that and this helps us. Those people making those investments have said, "Yes, that's going to help us." I think some of the unions out there are going to help us. It's going to help and are supportive of these project agreements.

Not only does that help these construction workers in those jobs in Sarnia, but after these plants are built it provides thousands of jobs for Ontarians for years and years to come. The \$5 billion is only a number of investment that's available in the petrochemical industry. There are billions of dollars of investment just waiting out there that perhaps can also go forward once we have project agreements in place.

I have talked briefly about some of the consultations that have taken place. I have talked about the project agreements themselves. The minister read some quotes from some groups. I would like to read one from the Independent Contractors' Group:

"I am writing to you on behalf of the Independent Contractors' Group (ICG). The ICG is an organization of open shop and unionized construction employers who work to ensure the tendering process in public sector contracts is open to all to bid and perform work.

"We would like to compliment you and your government for the introduction of Bill 31. The amendments to section 126 of the Labour Relations Act dealing with the definition of an employer will restore fairness to the public sector bidding process. Once passed these amendments will allow open bidding on taxpayer-funded projects regardless of employee affiliation within a company.

"Faced with a decision of listening to the rhetoric of the international union leadership or supporting the principles of openness and fairness as proposed by Bill 31, we would urge you to stay the course and continue to support freedom of choice."

Again, that's from the Independent Contractors' Group representing both open shop and unionized contractors in the province.

There were some other people out there who supported Bill 31. The *Timmins Daily Press* — I know the member opposite talks about *Timmins* quite a bit — and the title of this was "Ontario Open for Business." The *Timmins Daily Press* said, "We would applaud the decision of the Progressive Conservatives to balance the rights of business with those of labour to ensure the province will attract more business and more jobs."

The *Toronto Sun*: "The legislation also addresses restrictive rules that have handicapped the petrochemical industry, especially in Lambton-Sarnia, which is losing new plants and expansions to the Texas Gulf Coast and to Alberta." We don't want that to continue to happen.

Finally, the *Windsor Star* says, "Under the proposed legislation, the board must recognize the majority outcome, but still order a new vote if it believes the vote was

deputy minister meets with unionized construction contractors. April through June, parties continued with their discussions, keeping the minister involved with how those discussions were going.

June 9, 1997, Ministry of Labour mediation services convened a consultation session with labour and management. January 26, 1998, minister and staff met with the provincial building trades council. February 9, 1998, Paul Gardner, then director of mediation services at the Ministry of Labour, held consultation sessions with the building trades and contractors. March through April, minister and staff hold face-to-face meetings with building trades and contractors. May 21, 1998, deputy minister meets with a delegation from building trade unions and the contractors.

There has been a large number of consultations on the issues that are contained in this bill. More specifically, I must tell you, as I have indicated before, in July 1997 there was a final proposal made to the Minister of Labour regarding certain labour relations matters in the construction industry from the labour representatives of the industry committee, and in that document those labour representatives — I believe all of the representatives from the building trades council, the plumbers and pipefitters, the sheet metal workers, the warehousemen, the journey-men and apprentices in pipefitting, carpenters, plasterers, masons and it goes on — signed an agreement back in July 1997, after most of the consultations that the minister held, in support of project agreements.

I understand, politics being as they are, there is a need at this point in time, since they didn't actually at the end of the day hammer out agreements with the subcontractors and general contractors on several other issues, that at the end of the day, if you don't get 100% of what you want and there are some other things you may take exception with, you would then go back and say, "No, we are not in favour of that," but indeed the proposal submitted to the Minister of Labour appears to say something else.

With regard to project agreements, if someone is at home and not really understanding — I know Mr. Boushy and Mr. Beaubien from the Sarnia area know very well about project agreements — the purpose here is simply that in an area of the province where a significant economic project may be undertaken, the local unions can get together with the building proponent and hammer out a separate agreement, separate from the province-wide agreement, and that agreement would set new terms and conditions, perhaps on wages. It would allow for a no-strike/no-lockout clause so there could be confidence that project would start and end and the project would come to fruition.

With the project agreements right now, if all those unions came together with a building proponent, if just one of those local unions said no to such an agreement, the whole thing would fall apart. What we're saying is no, as long as 60% of those unions, for instance in Sarnia, can agree with the proponent on a separate project agreement outside the province-wide agreement, that project and all of that economic development should go ahead. This sets

unduly influenced." Of course, this is referring to the automatic certification provisions which we are addressing in the bill. The Windsor Star also supports that.

There are other newspaper articles that I've quoted from during debate on this bill in the past. One of those, for instance, is from the Sarnia area, which congratulates Mr Boushy and Mr Beaubien for their work in this area. They're happy because they also said Ontario is open for business and that we'll see a lot of jobs in the Sarnia area in the very near future.

In the time since this bill was introduced, there have been some myths and realities. We seem on this side of the House to always have to put out papers called Myths and Realities. We've done that on a variety of issues. You may have seen some of these papers we've put out in the past. I won't go into those other issues at this point in time, knowing the significance and importance of tonight's debate, but with regard to Bill 31, the Economic Development and Workplace Democracy Act, I'd like to address some of these myths and realities.

Myth number 1: that project agreements take away unions' right to strike. The reality is that unions negotiate all the terms and conditions of any project agreement, including no strike/no lockout provisions. Again, as I said earlier, 60% of the unions that are going to work on a project need to agree before that project agreement goes forward.

Another myth is that project agreements force unions to cut wages. Project agreements can only be entered into with 60% of the unions' approval and do not require any adjustment to the wages.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algonia): And what do the unions who are involved think about this? They are all against it.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Algonia.

Mr Maves: Another myth is that construction unions never agreed to project agreements. As I had mentioned earlier, construction unions and employers have agreed in principle on project agreements for almost a year, and in fact representatives of the industry committee they support project agreements.

Another myth is that there have been no meaningful discussions on the construction provisions of the bill. I addressed that in my opening comments.

Another myth that has cropped up is that employees of non-construction employers can't be unionized. The reality is that no employees will be denied collective bargaining rights. These employers are subject to the same rules as all other employers outside the construction industry.

Continuing along, there are a few more myths that have been out there.

Repeal of the OLRB's automatic certification or non-certification powers invites employer and union misconduct. The bill provides, and this is very important, that the labour board may do anything to ensure a fair secret-ballot vote reflecting the true wishes of employees and making sure that takes place. This is important. You must realize that if anything untoward happens, from either the union doing the organization or an employer whose work-

place is facing certification, the OLRB can do any number of things. This bill maybe even opens it up a bit further with the clause saying that they can do anything to ensure that a fair representation vote is taken.

That's the reality that has cropped up: this whole menu of remedies the OLRB can take in a situation where an employer in a certification process may be acting in an improper way. The public needs to know that this large list of remedies is still available, still there, and still will be, I would venture to guess, used quite a bit by the OLRB.

Those are some of the myths out there. It's always helpful to address those and clear them up, as the member on my left here says — not really on my left, but technically on my left.

I want to leave some time. I know the gentlemen from the Sarnia area, Mr Boushy and Mr Beaubien, have worked so hard on this bill on behalf of their constituents. I think the constituents in their communities are going to be among the happiest folks in Ontario when the bill passes because they're going to see such a large amount of development occur in that area of the province.

This government is all about jobs, the 370,000 that have been created in the last two and a half years that we've been in office, and we think that record is going to continue, especially as this bill is implemented. I think Mr Boushy and Mr Beaubien should be congratulated on their role. Thank you very much for the time on this bill.

1910

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton): It certainly is a pleasure for me to rise in the House tonight to speak on Bill 31 for the amount of time I have left. Let me start by saying that in my riding of Lambton this bill will mean jobs for the construction industry, jobs so desperately needed. I will explain why they are so desperately needed.

We have not been able to compete in the Sarnia-Lambton area due to the uncompetitive construction costs and we have lost out on many projects. This bill allows for more flexibility, in that projects can be negotiated locally. These changes will help to address some of the problems and will benefit all the residents of Lambton.

I'm fair enough and wise enough to realize that some union members in the Sarnia-Lambton area may not be happy with the bill. I realize that. However, show me a piece of legislation, member for Algonia, that you introduced in this House when you were in power where 100% of the population supported you.

This legislation also addresses restrictive rules that have handcuffed the petrochemical industry, especially in Lambton, which is losing new plants and expansions to the Gulf Coast states and Alberta.

Let me take you back 10 years in Sarnia-Lambton, where there was an awful lot of downsizing and plant closings. Some 7,000 highly paid jobs were lost. The demographics of Sarnia-Lambton have changed substantially in the past 10 years.

I ask the member for Algonia and the member for Cochrane South, where were you between 1990 and 1995 when the area was suffering economically? Where were you? What did you give us? You gave us the social com-

tract. I ask the individuals in the crowd, how much do you like that social contract? How much debate did we have on it? Was it sent for public hearings? Tell me. Of course the answer is no.

Let me go to a document provided to me by one of the union members in Sarnia-Lambton. The title of the document is 'The Building Trades' Response to Questions on Bill 31. The second question: "Don't you support economic development?" "Of course, we do. Real economic development means jobs with fair wages and benefits. What Bill 31 offers is lower-paying jobs that benefit large corporations."

Let me tell you, when I talked to the industries, the construction associations and the unions in the area, there is no doubt that the large corporations would have loved to have had double-breasting in the three-year-and-out programs. They didn't get it. Why? Because we care about the labour force. That's why we put forth project agreements, so people can negotiate locally.

Let's go on to the second question: "Aren't we losing jobs to the Texas Gulf due to uncompetitive construction costs, to remain competitive on large industrial projects?" This is a study by KPMG called 'The Competitive Alternative'. The opposition always likes to refer to KPMG. I guess they are a fairly well-known consulting firm in North America, so it's nice to see that the other side of the equation is also using KPMG.

It says: "According to the study, Canada has the best construction costs, the best business costs and its electricity rates are 25% lower than US rates. Canada holds a competitive advantage over the US as long as our dollar does not rise above 83 cents," and, as we all know, our dollar right now is running about 67 cents.

If that is the case, why is it that the area of Sarnia-Lambton in the past 10 years has experienced unemployment rates of 16%, 17%, almost 20%? If that is acceptable to the member for Cochrane North, it is not acceptable to the member for Lambton. Furthermore, when we talk about low-paying jobs and cutting rates, just remember that with negotiated agreements the unions and the corporation will negotiate the rates.

Let me give you some information. As a member of the Sarnia Lambton Council for Economic Renewal, this information may be one year old, but it's fairly close. The Sarnia labour rate is \$34.81. The Gulf Coast rate is \$23.50. According to my basic mathematics, that is 48.1% higher in Sarnia-Lambton than it is on the Gulf Coast. We do a lot of good things in Ontario. Engineering is 20% to 30% lower than it is in the States. Major equipment purchases are 24% lower. Bulk material purchases are 27% lower. When we look at the overall costs of labour, it's 37.5% higher. When we look at the overall picture, we are 8% above the Gulf Coast states and Alberta.

In my meetings with the unions, the construction association, I am not one to push for decreases in pay. I don't believe in it. However, if somebody wants to negotiate that, it's up to them. But I pointed to both sides of the equation, that there is a different way to get to the bottom

line, such as uniform hours of work per week, overtime, and it goes on and on. There are a lot of ways that we can reach the bottom line of 8% through the project agreements.

Let me assure you that we can do that in Sarnia-Lambton. There is no doubt that some of the business agents and some of the union members are not very happy with Bill 31, but let me tell you that I also got calls from people who are very supportive of the bill.

Another issue: This is in the paper entitled 'The Building Trades' Response to Questions on Bill 31. It has the question: "What is wrong with negotiating 'project agreements' outside of provincial agreements?" It says in response: "Bill 31 amends the definition of collective agreement to exclude project agreements. The grievance arbitration provisions of the labour act require there to be a collective agreement in place. Therefore, there is no process for dealing with a violation of a project agreement. This has serious implications for stable labour relations."

I strongly suggest that the Ontario Labour Relations Board's human rights conditions still apply to project agreements. If you're trying to throw this in the water for somebody to bite on it, people are a little smarter than that. They don't buy that, because they know that the labour relations board still applies to the project agreements.

Then in the third paragraph it says, "The one union, one vote does not consider the amount of work each trade will perform on the project; the number of workers involved from each trade; or the level to which each trade's provincial agreement is impacted by the project agreement." Local 663 in Sarnia-Lambton has roughly 1,100 members and the electrical workers — I don't know — 350 to 400 members. There is no doubt that Local 663 is the largest local in Sarnia-Lambton, no doubt about it. However, just a year ago we had a situation where 10 out of the 12 unions agreed to an agreement, but because we had two unions, namely Local 663 and the electrical union, that did not want to abide by the agreement, the agreement was kiboshed. Is that fair?

When we look at the economic impact it has on the people in the Sarnia-Lambton area, not only the union workers but the community as a whole, communities are getting smaller because the petrochemical industry is getting smaller. The reality is that we are losing the plants to the Gulf Coast states and Alberta. That is the reality.

Interjection

Mr Beaubien: I invite you to come and talk to some of our constituents in Sarnia-Lambton and see how they react to Bill 31. Come on down. It's only a three-and-a-half-hour drive. It's a nice area to visit during the months you're going to have off, July and August, so come on down.

Let's keep in mind that Bill 31 will not satisfy everyone in Sarnia-Lambton. It is a given. There is no doubt about it. I realize this. The minister realizes that. The member for Niagara Falls realizes that. The member for Sarnia realizes that. However, the community as a whole can

now start to look at a bright future, a bright future not only for the union workers. When I look at the union workers in the locals in Sarnia, they're not 20 and 30; they're mainly 40 and 50. That gives you a reason why they're that age. Then we can look at a bright future for our kids, who will be the backbone of this province in the future.

1920

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I'm pleased to

participate tonight in one sense, in that we at least have the opportunity to speak, but it's probably for the last time, unfortunately. I say it's unfortunate because I think down the road there was the potential for an agreement on all sides, all parties. I saw the documentation and proposals that were made. The member for Niagara Falls talked about an agreement. It wasn't an agreement at all. On July 18 the provincial trades council put forward a particular proposal for consideration, and some of that would have addressed the problems and the reactions and the worries now. Some of the discussions that took place were around the specifics of the proposal. A number of issues that came in with this bill were never on the table.

Therefore, it seems to me that one way to counter that, in what is called the democratic process, is for the government of the day to put forward their proposal in reaction, but then at least employ hearings, "Here's what we heard, here's what we thought, here's what we think could work, here's why." Have hearings. Let the people speak.

One of the most important steps in the so-called legislative, democratic process — and I say this to all members. I say this to the member for Lambton because I know he's worked very hard and I think he believes in what he is saying. I believe that step is the most important one. Any time any government of any stripe doesn't have hearings, I say to the people of Ontario, beware, because they do not have the confidence to put their program before the people and listen to what they say, listen to the reaction. What an arrogant position it is, and how many times have we seen that?

We have two bills here in the House tonight, two extremely important bills. We're going to speak on the other one that's called election financing, a way to buy votes and make sure that the government of the day, with their majority, will be in a favoured position — not very democratic. No hearings either. That will determine how elections are done, it's the single time, if you don't like the government, in which you might place your vote for an alternative, and what's happening? You've got the government of the day proposing a favoured position for themselves because of their connections with big business. That's the way it works. It's unfortunate.

The minister said in his speech tonight, "The well-paying jobs begin once the construction project is finished." I don't know if that was a slip of the tongue or if he meant to say that the well-paying jobs in the construction projects will continue as well and perhaps beyond, once the facility is completed. But he didn't say that. He said, "The well-paying jobs begin once the construction project is finished."

Talking about competitive construction prices, the member for Lambton talked about this and the minister talked about this, and what they had to say was all the factors that contribute to being competitive. They say construction costs in Ontario are higher. That probably varies from place to place. He asked the question, "Why was it in the 1980s or the early 1990s that not much happened in Sarnia?" I don't know, but one reason is probably because of the high interest rates that were there at the time. The rejigging of some of the American petrochemical firms that were replacing some of the Canadian installations and going south, going to Asia or wherever else they were going, to the Gulf states. Then he said, "The 8% factor, we're 8% higher in Canada than others." I suggest to you that there are other factors. Alberta doesn't have the access to markets. Why do you think there's interest now in the petrochemical area? Because of low interest rates, because of an educated, highly skilled workforce, because of proximity to Toronto, to Detroit, to Chicago, to the Midwest. Those factors weren't mentioned by the members on the government side. Of course, the people in the petrochemical areas are not stupid. Their job is to look at where they should best locate. They want to locate in certain parts of Ontario and of course they want to look for the most profitable arrangement. Understandable. That's the way business works.

But we also have an issue which is called fairness, so sometimes I want to vomit because they all seem to suggest the reverse: "the democratic workplace."

On a project agreement you're going to have 60% of whatever unions are there, which was not, by the way, the 10 unions and let's say that three of the unions really have 60% of the work and six of the smaller unions disagree. Do the three larger ones have to go along with it? Yes, they would under this bill. Is that democratic? There's no consideration of weighting of the extent to which any one particular union, or two or three, may have a majority of the work and therefore a majority of the workers. When I hear the minister say, "The well-paid jobs begin once the construction project is finished," that is a worry. That is a worry on the part of many members of the trades.

The member for Niagara Falls also referred to the independent contractors. I had a call from a representative of the independent contractors who said they had some major problems with this. They were worried about this. Also, I understand there was a major general contractor who was trying to speak with the minister, along with a representative from the trades council. It didn't materialize. The minister didn't want to talk to them. He still doesn't want to listen. He's not going to have hearings either, because he's right. He feels he is right, so they'll ram this through and, like many other bills, ladies and gentlemen, that have come back — the property tax bill came back four times because they didn't want to listen. It came back four times because the people who have to implement the situation couldn't make it work, and so we have a problem.

I really don't understand and I would like to hear from the minister. I asked him a question earlier in the week. I asked him why he wouldn't have hearings. If he has the guts to not have hearings, at least have the guts to explain why you do not want to have hearings. It could have been a short period of time. I offered an alternative to you early in the process that might have been acceptable, and that was to take the project agreement section and isolate it, split it off and go to your consultations, bring all the parties together. I would bet you would be far closer than where you are today, if not in full agreement, with having made that kind of arrangement, and then bring it back. I'm sure, if there was agreement, you would have had all sides of the House applauding you. That's called leadership. You gave up too early in the process because you want to move it so quickly. What's the big hurry? We've got some time. We have some time.

Hon Mr Flaherty: Jobs.

Mr Patten: Jobs for sure.

Hon Mr Flaherty: Thousands of jobs.

Mr Patten: Jobs for sure. The minister says "Jobs."

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr Patten: Jobs at any price. It seems to me that every time there is a labour bill — maybe not every time but most times there's a labour bill, what happens? There's an acknowledgement about the uniqueness of the construction sector, the construction/building sector. The same thing happened with the WCB, that particular bill. There are some difficulties. We've got an average size of companies of about seven members up to ones with many more employees. Historically, there's always been an understanding of the sensitivity in the construction area. That's why in 1975 Bill Davis brought in some province-wide negotiations that seemed to work well.

I have to finish here because I have three colleagues — one from Ottawa West, one from Lawrence and one from Prescott-Russell — who want to speak on this bill. There are hundreds of letters that I've received, and I know the minister has as well, but I want him to know that the people he was negotiating with would represent about 50 trades throughout the province feel denied, feel that some- how they were ignored, the issues that have been raised

When you talk about changing the role of the labour boards, that this is more democratic, I would like to know who, in operating any organization, any business, any group whatever that had a 99.5% success rate — in other words, and I'll use the statistics from the government side, there were 4,547 applications over a four-year period. 22 of them were challenged by the labour board. That represents less than one half of 1%. That means that 4,400 and whatever it is were successful. It may not be perfect, because there's half a per cent. You tell me what doesn't work. I don't know any business that considers, "If we're off maybe a percentage on this or a percentage on this on sales, revenue, cost or whatever it is, that's going to bring down the company," unless they are really in bad condition to begin with.

Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence): I'm glad to speak on this bill. I'd like to share some of my views in this regard in that I think it's important to recognize that over the last number of years in this province we have had a relative period of calm with respect to labour relations. Now, given the current situation with the construction trades, that isn't the case. I think this bill will only inflame that situation or make it worse and I don't understand for the life of me why the government would want to change that good climate, one that's positive and attracts investment, to one that is sour, which I might add would turn away investment. What good is this? What good is it if it's going to be counterproductive? It will have the opposite effect.

If I were a corporation looking at a place to invest, I would be concerned about the climate that is fostered by this bill. This is not to suggest that people aren't going to work in a spirit of cooperation if they can, and certainly they tried to do so with the minister and with this government. The contractors and unions have been trying to solve this problem for some time. I think the minister should have adopted and brought right into the legislation the agreement that had almost been signed back in December 1997, which failed because of some disagreements among some of the parties to the agreement. It failed, no doubt, but why didn't the minister just bring it forward? Why didn't the minister make it part of the legislation, which would have been adopted at that point? I think you could have opted out of or allowed for projects valued at less than \$15 million. This is what the agreement called for. Generally, on the part of most of the parties partaking in that set of negotiations, there was agreement on that basic point, that projects valued at less than \$15 million would have been exempted from these province-wide agreements. That certainly would have helped the small contractor. There's no doubt about that. That's what it was intended to do. Why did you have to take this step, which goes a lot further than that?

It now makes it virtually impossible not to come to the view that what this is all about is an effort on the part of

interest rates, carrying costs, the cost of debt financing were too high. So when you look at all the various costs, that was probably the biggest reason and, I might say, the only reason why investment was not taking place in the petrochemical industry in the Samia area.

Today, that is no longer the case. The climate has changed drastically. So don't use the excuse that construction costs are uncompetitive. They're not. By and large, we are competitive and, by and large, the environment is one where our construction workers, by the way, are some of the most effective and efficient in the world. That's what you're losing sight of here, that we do have a climate where investment has taken place. In fact, the economy has turned around largely because of interest rates being lowered. All the other factors have been virtually the same.

Again, I go back to what I said earlier: You're going to create a very negative climate. You're going to create labour unrest in the province as a result of your fundamental changes here, at a time when we don't need it, at a time when the economy has been recovering, at a time when we're getting job creation in spite of your stupid policies over there. At the end of the day you're losing sight of that. It's important for people to recognize that.

And they will, by the way, begin to recognize just what it's all about and how it all adds up. I think people who are viewing this understand that you really haven't thought this thing through. If you did, then you should be honest about it and you should put it forward that you are driving wages further down and that this bill is nothing more than that.

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): I'm following the remarks by my colleagues from Ottawa Centre and Lawrence with respect to Bill 31. I too have such tremendous concerns with respect to this bill. The remarks by my colleagues have outlined many of the concerns I have, but I do want to focus a little bit on process, a little bit on what the bill is attempting to do, and talk perhaps a little bit on the process of good government.

This bill shows the heavy hand of the Harris government once again interceding in the marketplace to tilt the playing field. It's amazing to hear this coming from a government that campaigned just three short years ago on getting government out of your face, on reducing red tape and getting government out of interference in the marketplace. But here they're coming in with this bill, which they have entitled, in their typical Orwellian Newspeak, the Economic Development and Workplace Democracy Act.

In terms of economic development, I thought the member for Lawrence hit it bang on. It really has to do with trying to drive down labour costs in the construction industry. Why would the government want to do this? Originally, the government said it was consulting with the construction trades industry, both the employers and the unions, to try and facilitate how these arrangements can be put into place to make our economy work more effectively and more efficiently. Indeed, the unions were seduced into participating in this. What has happened? The government has tabled a bill that the unions find anathema, but the

the government to drive wages down in the construction industry. This is the thin edge of the wedge and ultimately it will lead to lower wages. Of course that may create some jobs in the short term and of course there will be people who will look to invest. I have no doubt about that. But is that what we want in this province: lower-wage jobs? Do we want to compete with Georgia? I suppose the government should then stand up and say: "That's what we're doing. We're creating an environment just like they have in the southeastern United States and other low-wage jurisdictions."

Construction jobs are high-paying jobs. They are high-skill jobs. They're difficult jobs, many of them, and they're dangerous jobs. I think this will also lead to a very unsafe kind of workplace because you're driving down wages. I see in the future a lessening of the effort that's made on safety in the workplace, because that too drives up costs. Everything does, by the way. At some point employers will look at all of these aspects and say, "We've got to make things more competitive, so therefore we'll make things less expensive." We won't have the kind of workplace safety that we have built up over the last number of decades.

Ontario wasn't always like that 25, 30, 40 years ago. It was dangerous to work in construction. Let's not forget that. You're driving wages down. You're going to get to the point where safety is no longer an issue of concern for anyone, like an employer. It costs money to encourage a climate where safety is uppermost in the workplace, where it has the kind of placing that it does now, the importance that is has now. So wages will be driven down. That's the net effect of what you're doing here.

I want to refer to the study that KPMG did which was referred to by my colleague the member for Lambton. It was titled *The Competitive Alternative*. He twisted and turned this. Ultimately it suggested that when they looked at the impact of land purchase, construction, labour, electricity, debt servicing and taxation, Canada leads the world in competitiveness. It included construction costs. All of those things were considered.

My friend was pointing to this study and suggesting that there were other factors. So why didn't Samia get the kind of jobs it was looking for 10 years ago? There were structural changes in the economy. Interest rates were at an all-time high. Inflation was the enemy. It was the Bank of Canada that drove interest rates higher than was justified for internal rates of return for projects like this, which are mammoth projects, to make it possible for people to invest, for companies to invest in Canada and, for that matter, in other jurisdictions which had high-interest-rate policies. Remember, the G-7 countries had determined that inflation was the enemy, so interest rates made it virtually undesirable to have an investment policy in any of the G-7 countries, and there was very little investment going on at the time.

It happened that the petrochemical industry — you have to be able to justify these projects. The internal rates of return simply could not justify those projects because

amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act. I heard the minister stand up and say, "Every certification should be by a majority vote." But what happens when the employer intimidates to the point where no vote will be deemed fair?

The minister knows that every time there is an unfairly held vote, the labour board holds a hearing. There is due process, Minister, and you know this. The labour board doesn't walk in and say, "Therefore there shall be certification." It holds a hearing. The employer comes forward and gives evidence and the employee representation comes forward. Likely under the union, and gives evidence. The board, through a fair process that adheres to the principles of natural justice, hears the evidence and makes a determination.

Minister, are you paying attention here? Of 4,547 applications, only 22 were certified, because the labour board said the well was poisoned. It was impossible to hold a fair vote. What happens when it's impossible to hold a fair vote? You say, "Go back and do it again," when it's impossible to hold a fair vote. Quite simply, it's impossible to hold a fair vote when the employer has intimidated by either saying, "I'll fire you and you," or "I'll fire you, yes," or "I'll fire you and you." The minister can't say it's otherwise. The facts are there. That's part of the process.

The minister knows it wasn't our party's government that brought in that legislation. It wasn't the New Democratic Party, when they held power, that brought in that legislation. It was his party, the Progressive Conservative Party, that brought in this legislation, because there was such rampant, flagrant abuse. Yet this government wants to take it away, wants to open up the doors. It says, "If there has been a violation in the process whereby a fair vote cannot be held, we'll have it anyway. What the heck, second time lucky." No. That's a violation of the due process of freedom of association, of allowing people to make legitimate, fair-minded choices about their future. That's what it's about.

Why can't you allow the process to work properly and fairly? What does the government have that it's so scared of allowing the Ontario Labour Relations Board, after conducting a hearing and hearing both sides in the process, to make a decision? Out of 4,547 certification applications, only 22 were certified because it found that the vote the first time was spoiled, was poisoned, because there was undue, flagrant, obvious violation of due process.

It is indefensible to sit there and say, "Oh, therefore we must change this bill." I'm sorry, Minister. I think you've heard from all of us here. You're venturing into an area — the construction trades — where one has to look very carefully at the impact of actions. When one tilts the playing field like this and then does not allow for any public hearings, does not allow for any due process — ah, but I forget, it's the Harris government we're dealing with; the Harris government that brought in Bill 26, the bully bill that tried to ram this thing through; the Harris government that has brought in bill after bill after bill and

employers like it. Instead of being up front and honest and taking this bill out to public hearings, to try and find a middle ground, to try to improve the workings of our economy by taking the criticism that this bill so richly deserves, by trying to strike a balance, it's not interested. They're not interested in listening.

This is the Mike Harris government. The Mike Harris government does not like to listen. The Mike Harris government loves to ram things through. Here we are on our fourth day of debate. This bill was introduced on June 4, and we've had three hours of debate on June 11, three hours on June 15 and three hours on June 16. By rights we should be heading off to committee whereby any taxpayer across this province would be able to come forward. Certainly we would expect to hear from the building trades industry to find out what is good about it and what are the awkward parts. The other players in the field, the unions, the men and women who actually do the work, who actually build these projects, are we going to hear from them? No. The government is not interested in hearing from them. Why? Because it doesn't care. It doesn't want to hear, and it's wrong.

This is a controversial bill. It takes two to build out there in the construction trade industry, and what do we have instead? Those people who actually sweat out their guts to build these things, take their lives in the hands in the workplace and put these projects together, after which we say "It's a marvellous job," they are being deprived of their legitimate voice in participating in this process. What are they going to be doing? I quote here from the business manager of the Ontario Pipe Trades Council: "A lawful protest, including information lines, will likely spread across Ontario unless the government listens. Workers will not stand by and watch our basic democratic rights be taken away without a fight."

This is not providing for a stable environment from which our economy can grow. We have to remember that in Ontario over 97% of all labour negotiations end up being peacefully settled at the table. Why, then, would the government step in and tilt the balance? Well, we know quite clearly it wishes to provide an economic advantage to the employer here, not because there's a crying need to balance in terms of competitiveness. We heard from both the member for Lawrence and the member for Ottawa Centre that the Peat Marwick KPMG study showed that our economic competitive advantage was there and that we were certainly competitive in terms of costs. But no, the government has an agenda. It is an anti-employee agenda, an anti-union-rights agenda, and it's just carrying forward.

I'm beginning to sound like a member of the third party here, but I'm only speaking to what is before us here in terms of trying to deal with an important part of our economy, the construction economy, and how we try to facilitate having a balanced approach to both employer and employee relations. This government is just hell-bent on tilting the playing field.

Another aspect my colleague from Ottawa Centre touched upon was the amendments to the Labour Relations Act, amendments to the Employment Standards Act and

says: "We have the God-given right to govern. We had an election in 1995. We can dispense with public hearings. We don't need to hear from the taxpayers. We don't need to hear from the people who know better than us how the system works, because we're right."

All I can say is that at the end of the day it is the people who are right, and the people won't tolerate unfair practices such as are envisaged in this bill.

1950

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell) : C'est

avec plaisir que je prends la parole sur ce projet de loi 31. Loi visant à promouvoir le développement économique et à créer des emplois dans l'industrie de la construction, favorisant la démocratie en milieu de travail et apportant d'autres modifications aux lois ayant trait au travail et à l'emploi.

Le projet de loi aura certainement un impact sur les lois déjà en vigueur, telles que le projet de loi 49, qui se lit comme suit : «Loi visant à améliorer la Loi sur les normes d'emploi» et le projet de loi 7, «Loi visant à rétablir l'équilibre et la stabilité dans les relations de travail et à promouvoir la prospérité économique...» ce projet de loi sur lequel je travaille depuis plus de deux ans et demi, sur la mobilité des travailleurs et «contracteurs» en Ontario et du Québec. Je croyais voir beaucoup plus dans ce projet de loi qui aurait au moins favorisé les travailleurs de la construction et les entrepreneurs de l'Ontario. Certes, comme tout projet de loi, ce projet comprend des avantages et des désavantages.

L'avantage, c'est que le gouvernement réalise qu'il y a en Ontario un domaine que l'on appelle la construction. La construction est le rouage de l'économie. Malheureusement, l'industrie de la construction a fait un pas en arrière durant sept mois, qui étaient entre juillet 1997 et janvier 1998, où l'on a perdu plus de 19 000 emplois.

Le désavantage, c'est la venue du projet de loi 31, qui causera non seulement des complications, mais plutôt un chaos total qui créera en retour une instabilité dans le domaine de la construction. Dieu sait que nous n'avons certainement pas besoin d'augmenter le degré de complexité dans le domaine de la construction, et il semble évident que le projet de loi 31 favorise et avantage certains groupes d'intérêts spéciaux. Notons comme exemple Wal-Mart, TD Bank, Ellis-Don, pour n'en nommer que quelques-uns, sans oublier que l'introduction même de ce projet de loi 31 est en opposition totale aux principes de la démocratie.

En effet, la société n'a rien à gagner en implantant un projet de loi qui va permettre aux employeurs de congédier, menacer et intimider des employés pour la simple raison qu'ils voteront contre l'union. La loi 31 est encore un autre exemple typique où le gouvernement en place ne se préoccupe aucunement des besoins, des désirs et même de la vie des Ontariens. Ce n'est certainement pas la première fois où le gouvernement va réglementer ou légiférer dans un domaine sans consultation ou évaluer les conséquences à long terme de leurs actes.

La liberté de choix d'adhérer ou non à un syndicat est un privilège qui devrait provenir d'une décision personnelle prise par l'employé lui-même et non par l'imposition d'une loi.

Le 1^{er} juin dernier, j'ai eu l'occasion de faire partie d'une audience publique qui a eu lieu à Ottawa sur le domaine de la construction. Ayant entendu divers groupes provenant de l'Ontario et du Québec, permettez-moi de vous dire qu'il est vrai que certains règlements doivent être établis dans le domaine de la construction — toute-fois, des règlements équitables pour tous et non des règlements qui viennent brimer les droits des Ontariens.

Lorsque le gouvernement légifère ou réglemente un domaine, il faut toujours garder l'idée que la liberté de choix est un principe fondamental de la société démocratique canadienne. Pourquoi n'avons-nous pas accepté de tenir des audiences publiques afin d'être à l'écoute des experts ? Nous avons décidé de pousser d'avant et d'essayer de passer la troisième lecture le plus tôt possible, afin de ne pas être à l'écoute des experts dans le domaine de la construction. Il est évident que si nous voulons s'ingérer ou légiférer dans le domaine de la construction, il serait peut-être important de tâter le pouls de la population ouvrière sur cette question. Mais encore une fois, l'opinion des gens, selon le gouvernement actuel, n'est certainement pas un facteur important.

Le gouvernement a maintes reprises fait allusion dans la déclaration du 4 juin dernier que le projet de loi 31 favoriserait la compétitivité, le développement économique et les relations ouvrières dans les différents domaines de la construction. Ce gouvernement a aussi déclaré que les Ontariens devraient avoir confiance dans les lois de l'Ontario. Est-ce que nous avons confiance lorsqu'on essaye de passer un projet de loi à la vitesse sans écouter ou être à l'écoute des gens qui se connaissent dans le domaine ?

Comment est-ce que le gouvernement peut aujourd'hui croire qu'en limitant les droits des travailleurs d'adhérer ou non à un syndicat, en brimant les droits fondamentaux des travailleurs, on atteint les objectifs de la compétitivité et du développement économique ?

Le 4 juin dernier, le gouvernement faisait également allusion que le projet de loi 31 favorisait la création d'emplois. Pouvez-vous garantir aux Ontariens ce soir que ce projet de loi favorisera les «contracteurs», les travailleurs et les investisseurs de l'Ontario et non les entrepreneurs, les travailleurs et les investisseurs hors province ?

De plus, le projet de loi 31 est, selon votre gouvernement, un véhicule qui favorisera l'efficacité, la flexibilité et une meilleure opportunité pour les travailleurs ontariens. Permettez-moi de vous dire que le domaine de la construction en Ontario est un domaine déjà très flexible et je dirais même trop flexible. Parlez-en aux «contracteurs», aux entrepreneurs et aux travailleurs qui, à tous les jours, essaient de traverser les ponts du Québec. Je regardais dans les coupures des journaux aujourd'hui où l'on a référé que maintenant, du au fait que ça prenait 100 %, un accord de tous les travailleurs, pour être capable de venir à une entente avec les employés afin d'être compétitif avec des entrepreneurs de l'extérieur ou des entrepreneurs non syndiqués — je voudrais vous dire qu'en Ontario nous avons eu des audiences tout récem-

him so that he could be here this afternoon to speak to the bill.

"This is a government that rammed through its election finance reform legislation without consensus of the other parties — unprecedented here. They like to talk a lot about democracy, but that's the sort of democracy we get from them. That's what they mean about democracy.

They like to talk about workplace democracy as well. When they talk about that, well, we can just look at some of the other examples.

Bill 7 permits scabs to work in workplaces that have democratically voted to go on strike.

They have a Minister of Labour who voted on a private member's bill to eliminate the Rand formula. This isn't a Minister of Labour, he isn't a minister for labour, this is a minister against labour. That's what these guys are all about.

It gets worse. They don't even want to have any public hearings with respect to this bill, notwithstanding the fact that the member for Hamilton Mountain said, and this is a story from the Hamilton Spectator, "I'm not sure why we can't have some hearings this summer and wrap it up in the fall." You know what that was? Trevor Pettit, the member for Hamilton Mountain. That's what he said. I thought he was a member of the Progressive Conservative government. They don't even want to listen to their own backbenchers.

I've gotten a number of letters; I know many people have. This is from the Labourers' International Union of North America, the Windsor branch, Wally Dunn. He's the business manager there. Writing about this bill, he says:

"Local 625 is concerned because the workers involved in the construction industry were not consulted regarding this regressive piece of legislation.

"We are asking that you do everything in your power to ensure that Bill 31 does not proceed to third reading.

"We feel that this bill will do nothing but cause discord in the construction industry, which up to this point in time has enjoyed cooperation in the economic growth of our communities."

We're trying to do what we can to get public hearings on this bill, but so far we've been unsuccessful. I've got another letter, from the Carpenters and Joiners, Local 494, Jack McDowell. He's the president and organizer with that local. He says:

"We respectfully request that this bill be the subject of public hearings across the province so as to give local contractors...as well as labour, crucial input so as to assist you, yourself," meaning the Minister of Labour, "in better understanding the damage this bill in its present form will do to the construction industry in Ontario. It would be a grave injustice to pass such legislation without consulting management and labour in the arena of public hearings."

Once again, the government doesn't want to listen to this letter and have public hearings. But it's no surprise. Bill 31 is also known as the Wal-Mart bill. This is what I would call the most anti-worker, anti-labour, anti-union piece of legislation that this government has come

ment, en novembre 1997. Les employés n'étaient même pas au courant que nous sommes venus à une entente avec le syndicat pour leur dire que : « Vous allez travailler dorénavant à un salaire inférieur à ce que vous avez obtenu. »

Aujourd'hui on dit que ça va demander un accord de 60 % au lieu de 100 %. Le 100 % n'existe même pas. J'ai le rapport ici de M. Tremblay et son fils qui ont dû se rendre devant le bureau des relations du travail et défendre leur cause. Je crois que l'on doit protéger nos travailleurs ontariens, nos entrepreneurs ontariens, qui actuellement n'ont aucune sécurité pour travailler en Ontario, et ce projet de loi ne protégera certainement pas nos travailleurs de la construction de l'Ontario.

J'étais sous l'impression, depuis les deux ans et demi que nous partons de la construction en Ontario, que nous étions pour inclure dans ce projet de loi la protection de la santé et de la sécurité de nos travailleurs. Nous avons complètement oublié de l'insérer ou de l'inscrire dans le projet de loi. Je disais la semaine dernière qu'en Ontario, dans le domaine de la construction, la Commission des accidents du travail a dû payer à des employés avec des adresses du Québec plus de 50 \$ millions en compensation pour les accidents du travail. Est-ce que nous avons quelque chose dans ce projet de loi pour protéger nos travailleurs de la construction ? Absolument pas. C'est peut-être quelque chose pour protéger les entrepreneurs, mais nous avons complètement oublié la protection de nos travailleurs de la construction.

C'était un grand plaisir de pouvoir parler sur le projet de loi.

2000

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): I just want to say at the outset that I'll be splitting my time with the members for Cochrane South and Algoma.

This evening is another one of those sad days for democracy. What this government is doing is killing democracy one cut at a time. It's death to democracy by a thousand cuts. Tonight they're ramming through another piece of controversial legislation as part of their anti-worker agenda, another time allocation motion to limit the debate that we have. We have a very short time to address our concerns about this bill. Two hours of debate on third reading is all we have, and the government's going to ram this through.

It's not a surprise from this government. It's their standard approach. Every time they introduce a bill, a little bit of debate and then the time allocation motion to shut it down. This is no different.

Our critic, the member for Hamilton Centre, David Christopherson, was unable to be here this evening because he's having his nomination meeting, a nomination meeting in which he will be successful, I have no doubt, and will no doubt be successful in retaining his riding in a general election because he hopes to be the Minister of Labour in the next NDP government.

When he asked to have this bill this afternoon, the government wouldn't agree to it. They wouldn't accommodate

doesn't work any more. That's the justification they are using to say that a remedy that had been introduced by a Progressive Conservative government over 20 years ago to deal with unfair labour practices of employers, employers who had illegally tampered with the outcomes of votes, was no longer good enough. I say that's a sad day for workers in Ontario.

This government likes to talk about how workers should somehow be put in a fairer bargaining position through this legislation, better workplace democracy, and what they're doing is actually changing the rules to guarantee that there is never a vote that is without intimidation, coercion, firings or a whole litany of anti-union actions that will only be limited by the creativity of employers.

They talk a lot about fairness, but we know what fairness means to them. We saw it in their Tenant Protection Act, an act where they say tenants should be able to negotiate with landlords for a fair rent. We know that the bargaining position of tenants is completely unfair when they're dealing with landlords. It's the same case for employees. Employees aren't going to be able to negotiate with employers on a one-on-one basis and somehow be treated fairly. It just isn't going to happen. They're going to be faced with the situation of voting to keep their jobs, and the question will be, "Do you want your job or not, yes or no?" That's what they mean by "labour fairness."

Under these rules, we're never going to see unions established in stores like Wal-Mart in the future. That's what this government is trying to do. They are trying to drive down wages in Ontario. They are trying to eliminate unions. They are trying to ensure that fairness for workers means permitting employers to get away with any anti-union activities that they are able to, and the only sanction that will be imposed is a fine. It's basically going to be a licence fee for employers to do whatever it is they want to do that and that's why this government is now taking the steps they are taking in this regressive piece of legislation, Bill 31.

I say shame on the government for taking these steps, shame on taking the steps that you're taking against unionized workers in Ontario and shame for not taking this bill out for public hearings. If you're so proud of it, why don't you take it out to the people in the province and let them have a say?

Mr Wildman: I want to thank my friend for giving me some time to speak on this piece of legislation. I'd like to put my remarks on Bill 31 into the context of the companion piece of legislation that we're going to be dealing with later this evening, that is, Bill 36.

Bill 31 is a bill that deals with changes to the Labour Relations Act as it relates to denying workers the opportunity to form collective bargaining units that will make it possible for them to bargain together for fairness in the workplace. Bill 36 is a bill that is designed to ensure that the government of the day has the advantage in an election

up with in its agenda. They talk a good talk about how this is all about job creation, but that's not what it's about. This is all about kicking the stuffing out of unionized workers in the province of Ontario. That's what it's about. Why is it they are doing that? Fifteen cases in the last four years have used the automatic certification provisions of the Ontario Labour Relations Act to put in place unions where the vote was actually against the union by the workers. It was against the union for a number of reasons,

and I'm going to get into that.

One case specifically caused the government to bring forth this legislation, and that was the case of the Wal-Mart store at 1950 Lantz Road, which just so happens to be in my riding of Windsor-Riverside. That was a case where the unionizing vote was that the employees at the store actually didn't vote, a majority of them, for the union. The government points to the results of that vote as justification to bring in this regressive piece of legislation.

But the Ontario Labour Relations Board rejected those results, and this is why: They found that the employer violated section 70 of the act. They found that the employer broke the law. They intimidated the workers to such an extent in this case that to have another vote would not lead to a fair result. They had so poisoned the workplace environment that they couldn't have another vote place that would be considered fair. How did they do that? The employees asked, "Will the store close if we vote for the union?" and the employer wouldn't answer the question. They wouldn't give them a straight answer. That's why the board certified the union in that case.

In their decision, they said, "This case is a classic example of a situation in which the conduct of the employer changes the question in the minds of the employees at the vote from one of union representation to one of: 'Do you want to retain your employment?' Yes or no."

You can imagine that in a case where employees are faced with a situation like that, they're going to vote to save their jobs or to keep their jobs. It wouldn't be surprising, in a case where an employer was able to intimidate employees to the extent that they did in the Wal-Mart case, that it would lead to the results that it did.

Wal-Mart wasn't happy with those results and they appealed to the Divisional Court and to the Supreme Court. They lost at both levels. This is the extent to which this employer will go to prevent the union from being established in its workplace.

It has been mentioned already here tonight that the legislation that assisted the employees in the Wal-Mart store in Windsor in having a union certified there wasn't into place, even though there were many pieces of legislation that the New Democratic government brought into place, even though we brought in more fairness in the labour relations that was brought in during the Liberal-NDP accord of 1985 and 1987. This was legislation that was brought in by a Progressive Conservative government over 20 years ago. It has worked well for 20 years, but now somehow they say that it

legislation so non-controversial that almost everyone agrees, or it's very complex legislation and so they do have hearings but they have them so short that we're not going to be able to deal with the issues.

On this legislation, Bill 31, the government continually says that this is supported by the labour movement, and yet when they stand to debate the bill, they inevitably quote Conrad Black and his minions and representatives of management and of the construction industry and the petrochemical industry.

The one time that the minister claimed he had a representative of labour supporting the bill — well, twice now. He pointed to the proposal of July 1997 that came from the construction unions — the proposal, not what actually came out in the bill — and then he also referred to an article from the Toronto Star which quoted one of the leaders of the labour movement.

Hon Mr Flaherty: It was the Globe and Mail. Get it right, for goodness' sake. It wasn't the Toronto Star. Come on, pay attention.

Mr Wildman: The Globe and Mail. As one of the members said about the north, that the north is the north, the media is the media when it comes to whether or not they deal with this government and democracy.

The government, though, for some unknown reason has failed to admit that they received letters directly from that same labour leader and other labour leaders indicating what their real view of Bill 31 is. I don't understand why the minister would not quote up-to-date correspondence he has received from those leaders, so I guess I'll have to do it for him.

The minister talks about workplace democracy in his Orwellian Newspeak as if this is going to increase democracy when it has exactly the opposite effect. This is what Patrick Dillon, business manager for the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario, had to say about that in his letter directed to the minister on June 16, 1998: "Amendments to section 11 will allow employers to fire, threaten and terrify workers into voting against the union."

I'd like to refer to one small example which I think comes close to home for the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour, the member for Niagara Falls. This relates to two young people, one Larry Savage and one Amanda Rogers, who were workers at Minoletta Tower in Niagara Falls. Last October, 56 of the workers at that workplace signed cards to join a union; in this case it was Local 442 of the Hotel, Restaurant, Hospitality Service Employees Union. Then the employer intimidation started. There was a premature layoff of Larry Savage for union activities, unjust discipline for others, surveillance of employees, and managers spread rumours that they had a list of those who had signed the union cards. On October 10 — keep in mind that 56 workers had signed cards — only 24 voted for the union; 62 voted against.

This particular matter is currently before the Ontario Labour Relations Board. The union is contending that there is no way to undo the poisoning of the workplace from the people who are affected by legislation, unless it's

campaign in a general election in this province and to make it difficult for opposition parties and the public to have a real democratic choice in a general election. They both indicate the attitude of this Tory government towards democracy, in one case in the workplace and in the other in Ontario, in our whole society.

I'd like to also put it in the context of what other things the government is doing at this time. We all know that this government has changed the rules of this House to make it very difficult for members of the opposition to slow down legislation or to ensure that legislation that needs to be amended is changed. We also know that this government has gotten so used to bringing in time allocation and setting and limiting the debate in this House, even with those rules, that we have many bills time-allocated by the Tories. As a matter of fact, it has become routine for the government to time-allocate legislation.

Both of these pieces of legislation, Bills 31 and 36, are time-allocated. We are now dealing with Bill 31 on third reading. We have set two hours for debate on third reading and we have no hearings. We have yet to vote on Bill 36, election finances, but we will be finishing second reading and going to third reading, again with no hearings. What else is this government doing? The government has brought in a bill called the Condominium Act, which is non-controversial, everybody agrees with it, and what has this government said? They want to have hearings on the Condominium Act. They want to have eight days of hearings on a bill that everybody agrees with, and yet on bills that are controversial, that have raised serious concerns about democracy, they don't want to have any hearings.

Let's look at another time-allocated bill. We have a very complex piece of legislation on the electric generating system in this province, Ontario Hydro, and the government has time-allocated that as well, but in that case, I'll give them credit, they have agreed to hold hearings as part of the time allocation. There will be how many days of hearings on this very complex piece of legislation? Eight days of hearings, the same as the Condominium Act that everybody agrees with and there's no controversy about.

We also have another bill — the government calls it a red tape bill — Bill 25. The government has time-allocated it as well, but they have said, "No, we'll have hearings on it," and in the time allocation motion they said, "We will have hearings next fall when the House comes back," and they have referred that bill for eight days of hearings to the justice committee of this House. Why? Because our party has asked for an investigation into the Ipperwash scandal, into the death of Dudley George, at the justice committee, and by moving that bill, a non-controversial bill to that committee for eight days, the government effectively blocks an investigation into the Ipperwash scandal.

What does that indicate about the Tories' commitment to democracy? It indicates that the government does not want to hear what the people think, does not want to hear from the people who are affected by legislation, unless it's

Mr Wildman: Okay. Then why have you continued with this bill?

Hon Mr Flaherty: You don't know what you're talking about. You don't even know what you're talking about.

Mr Wildman: Why have you ignored not only the construction unions but the companies —

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. Minister of Labour, you have to come to order. The member for Algoma has the floor.

Hon Mr Flaherty: But he is being inaccurate.

The Speaker: Minister of Labour, the member for Algoma has the floor. I appreciate that you don't agree with what he's saying, but he's got the floor.

Mr Wildman: Thank you, Speaker. You're so much help.

Mr Dillon goes on to say, "The provisions of Bill 31 allowing so-called non-construction employers" — like the TD Bank, one of those small business people that the government refers to — "to unilaterally decertify despite having been lawfully certified and despite the present process, which allows workers the right to decide for themselves" is another example of something that this government has put into Bill 31 that the unions never agreed to and had no input about.

Mr Dillon finally says: "You are putting everything that is good about the construction industry in jeopardy.... Specifically, in good conscience we will not be able to participate in any project agreement created under Bill 31. By introducing a bill that is viciously anti-union, you have decided that there will not be stability in the construction industry.... Withdraw Bill 31 in its entirety."

If these kinds of opinions are being expressed by Mr Dillon and all the business managers representing the construction trades in this province, how is it the minister can proceed on time allocation without even wanting to have hearings? Why is it that we aren't able to hear the position taken by the representatives of the construction workers and the rest of the labour movement in this province on this bill? Why is the government afraid to hear what the people really think, the people who are directly affected by the provisions of this legislation? Why is the government not prepared to talk to the general contractors in a public way to hear what they think? Why isn't the government prepared to amend the bill so we have true stability in the construction industry? Why isn't the government prepared to amend the bill so we indeed have democracy in the workplace?

I can tell you why this government doesn't want to have hearings. This government doesn't want to hear what people think and they don't want to hear what people have to say about their legislation, because they think they know better than the people of this province. They don't want to be confused by facts. They don't want to hear options that disagree with their own. That is because this government does not have any real commitment to democracy either in the workplace or in the province of Ontario.

employer's misconduct.

If this bill passes, even though this issue is currently before the labour board, the board will no longer have the power to certify the union under section 11. All the board would be able to do if it agrees with the union that the issue is so bad that it's been poisoned would be to order another vote. These workers, who've been unjustly disciplined, who've been watched, who've had runarounding, will now have the opportunity to vote again.

As I said earlier, if the government seriously believes that this is democracy, it's the same kind of democracy we used to have in the Eastern Bloc, where they used to get 97% of the voters voting for one party. Why? Because they were intimidated. That's the kind of democracy this government believes in.

What about the other part of the bill, the bill that deals with the construction industry? The minister has repeatedly said that the building trades were in favour of these proposals, mainly the project agreements. I have a letter here, one of these letters that the minister refuses to refer to.

This letter is signed by George Ward, business manager of the Ontario Sheet Metal Workers' and Roofers' Conference. Mr Ward says, "Bill 31 does not in any way resemble the building trades' proposals made to the construction employer group in July 1997." So much for Mr Maes and Mr Flaherty's referral to that proposal in July 1997. Mr Ward says it doesn't resemble that proposal at all.

He goes on to say: "We strongly oppose Bill 31, including its project agreement provisions. We have had no opportunity to provide input on these or any provisions of the bill." So much for the consultation the minister referred to. Mr Ward then says, "It is disingenuous for the minister to suggest otherwise." I suggest that Mr Ward is being polite.

Patrick Dillon from the building trades council goes on to say, again in the letter of June 16, 1998, to the minister: "The provisions creating project agreements are the complete opposite of anything we have proposed" — the complete opposite.

"These provisions will only create instability and chaos in the construction industry."

This is a government that claims it's in favour of encouraging investment and new jobs in Ontario. How on earth is creating instability and chaos in the construction industry going to encourage investment? It'll scare off investment. It's no surprise that a major general contractor like Ellis-Don wanted to meet with the minister to discuss this bill because that company was concerned about instability and chaos in the construction industry. I'd like to know why the minister refused to meet with Ellis-Don.

Hon Mr Flaherty: I met with Ellis-Don. What are you talking about?

somehow there has never been any economic development

doesn't stand up.

The second point I want to make on the economic argument is that they say they need to do this because they're trying to get to the issue of project agreements. They want to allow the employer, in this case the person managing a particular project, to go to individual building trade unions and try to negotiate a concessionary contract with at least 60% of those selected trades on that particular job. If that's agreed to, the effect will eventually be to rathered down the wages of the construction workers.

I want to put this forward. Why is it that every time employers are uncompetitive they come to us, the working people, and pick our pockets? Why don't they look in their own backyard? Why don't we look at the real issues? Why is construction expensive? The cost of land, the billions of dollars that have been made by speculators on the market from buying, holding and selling land. That has been an issue. Why is this government not dealing with it? No. Instead, rather than dealing with your friends the speculators, you deal with the workers of the province and say, "You pay, not the speculators."

Why don't you deal with the issue of the price of materials? You say the employers have to be more competitive. Why don't you deal with some of the issues that affect the parts industry, the people who supply the building materials and various equipment needed for construction? I don't see this government dealing with any of that. Why? Because it means they might have to tighten down on their corporate friends. Instead, you come to this Legislature and pick on those people who are least able to defend themselves: the working people of the province.

Then you wonder why I, as a social democrat, get upset? Darned right that I'm upset and darned right that Dave Christopherson, who can't be here tonight because he's at his nomination meeting, is upset and darned right that we understand the issue that the employer's got to be

profit and we understand that the employer's got to be competitive, but being competitive doesn't mean you go

and pick the employee's pocket clean.

If the government is saying, "We're doing this for economic reasons and we want to make the employer much more competitive," you at the very least have to deal with some of the issues and stop picking on the workers. If you were to do that, maybe then the building trades and other people would say, "The government's trying to be fair."

But this is not a question of being fair. It's a question of picking on workers, pure and simple.

The other thing is that the member for Lambton, with great fanfare and great description, talked about how the construction industry within the Samia area that's dealing in the petrochemical industry is somehow uncompetitive

Mr Bisson: I want to pick up from where the member

for Algoma left off, because I think he makes the point. When we take a look at this bill and at what this government is doing in it, you really have to come to the conclusion that this is a case of the government pushing the limit of what they think they can get away with.

This government was not content in coming into this House strictly with Bill 7, throwing labour laws back 50 years in Ontario. They weren't happy introducing a raft of other legislation that literally turned the clock back in this province some 50 years when it comes to workplace security and bargaining in Ontario. The government comes into the House today pushing the limit of what they think they can get away with, and in this particular case are going to be hurting the construction workers across this province.

I want to speak specifically to the economic issue. The Minister of Labour and his friend the parliamentary assistant, along with the member for Lambton, who got up and spoke to this bill — I think we should take the Hansard and circulate everywhere in the Samia area and the Lambton area — speak to this bill from the perspective that this is needed to make the construction industry more competitive to allow the creation of jobs in Ontario. Well, there are two problems with that argument.

The first one is, how could it be that Ontario has been for the past number of years the economic heartland of Canada? Why has there been record construction in Ontario with labour laws, some of the most progressive labour laws in Canada? In fact, for years Ontario has led the country when it comes to progressive labour laws. Even the Conservative government of Bill Davis, and before that of Mr Roberts, understood that to have a healthy economy and to have a healthy workplace you have to have good labour laws that set the rules in such a way that there's a balance between, yes, the need of the employer to make a profit, but also the ability of the employee to make a fair wage and to have working conditions that allow them to feel somewhat secure when it comes to their health and safety.

The government argues that they need this to be able to develop the economy of Ontario. The economy of Ontario has done well for the past number of years even with those labour laws. So where is the argument when the government tries to argue that they've got to turn the clock back

some 50 years and allow the construction industry more competitive?

There has been all kinds of construction in this province, from north to south, from east to west, in Samia, all over the place, and that has been done within the confines of the type of collective agreements we have now and with existing labour laws. Even with Bob Rae's Bill 40 we had record construction. I look at my community of Timmins.

We had over half a billion dollars of new construction during the years 1993 to 1996 in the communities of Timmins, Iroquois Falls and Matheson, and that's with

some good, progressive labour laws. The argument that

is going in the wrong direction. This government, at the very least, if it believes in its rhetoric of democracy and its ability to listen, has to send this bill back out to committee. The government has chosen not to. They're saying: "No. We know best. We're going to do what we have to do in order to ram this bill through. We're not going to give anybody the ability to comment on it at the hearings." They know damned well if this bill went to Sarnia or the Lambton area, not only the workers but the citizens of that community would come to our committee en masse to tell this government that they're going in the wrong direction. I also would like to finish on this point. We have a Minister of Labour here who supposedly calls himself the Minister of Labour. Let me tell you, after looking at this bill and other things this government has done, we should rename the Minister of Labour's position the Minister for the Implementation of the Corporate Anti-Labour Agenda.

The Speaker: Mr Flaherty has moved third reading of Bill 31. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2042 to 2047.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Harris, Michael D.
Hastings, John L.
Hudak, Tim
Jackson, Cameron
Johnson, Bert
Johnson, David
Jordan, W. Leo
Klees, Morley
Klees, Frank
Laach, Al
Leach, Al
Marsden, Gerry
McLean, Allan K.
Munro, Julia
Murdoch, Bill
O'Toole, John
Quellette, Jerry J.
Parker, John L.
Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Runciman, Robert
Sampson, Rob
Sheehan, Frank
Snobelen, John
Spina, Joseph
Stewart, R. Gary
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tilson, David
Turnbull, David
VanKoughnet, Bill
Wettauer, Wayne
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wood, Bob

Nays

Duncan, Dwight
Gerritsen, John
Grandmaitre, Bernard
Gravelle, Michael
Hoy, Pat
Kornos, Peter
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Lessard, Wayne
McGuinty, Dalton
McLeod, Lyn
Michash, Frank
Morm, Gilles E.
Patten, Richard
Papatilio, Sandra
Ramsey, David
Ruprecht, Tony
Sergio, Mano
Wildman, Bud
Wood, Len

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 52; the nays are 29.

as compared to Alberta and the Texas Gulf Coast. Well, excuse me. He went through all of the numbers and listed them — and you can go back to Hansard and check — but the point is that they're dealing with an exchange rate of about 40%. When you work all of that out, we're not less competitive than anybody else. Why has there been record investment in Ontario over the past 50 years? I've seen construction in my riding, as we've seen it in Algoma and in Sarnia and other places over the years, and that's with the labour rates we have today. You can't start comparing what we're paying workers on the Texas Gulf to what we're paying workers in Sarnia-Lambton or wherever it might be, because you've got to take the exchange rate into account. This government tends to forget all about that and tries to compare the numbers in the States without taking into account what the exchange rate does.

The reality is that Ontario is a very good place to do business. Why? Because we have an experienced workforce, a workforce that is capable and competitive and able to compete with the best in the world. All this government is doing is saying: "We're going to allow our corporate friends to make a few extra bucks. We're going to allow them mechanisms to get into the collective agreements and racket down some of the benefits and the wages." By their taking money out of the worker's pocket, they're going to give the employer an ability to be more competitive. Well, excuse me. It's not a question of being competitive; it's that you're trying to pick the pocket of the workers.

I also want to address the issue of public hearings, and the member for Algoma spoke to this a little while ago. This government today came into the House and brought together this very controversial bill through time allocation to third reading, knowing full well that the critic from our party, Dave Christopher, was at his nomination meeting tonight. You guys knew it and you did it on purpose. You brought this bill into the House knowing darned well that the critic for the NDP was at his nomination meeting. You tried to set it up in such a way so that he would not be seen speaking on this bill.

Let me tell you something. You might get away with not having Dave speak on this bill tonight, but come the next election, not only Dave Christopher, the labour critic for the NDP, but construction workers across this province will be dogging this government because they will remember what this government has done. This government has attacked their ability to negotiate fair collective agreements and keep them in place. This government has attacked their ability to organize. This government is going to be allowing workplaces in this province, through their employer, to poison the atmosphere within the workplace to try to keep the union out.

I tell you now that there are going to be thousands of construction workers in the next election who will not forget what this government is doing.

2040

I've got to finish on this point. We know this is a contentious bill, because the entire labour movement, almost in union at this point, is saying that this bill is flawed and

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled

as in the motion.

Interruption.

The Speaker: Clear the galleries.

ELECTION STATUTE

LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT DES LOIS

EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES ÉLECTIONS

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 36, An Act to amend the Election Act

and the Election Finances Act, and to make related amendments to other statutes / Projet de loi 36, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale et la Loi sur le financement des élections et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Pursuant to the order of the House, we will have a vote on second reading. Shall the motion carry? Agreed?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The division bells rang from 2053 to 2058.

The Speaker: Mr Hodgson has moved second reading of Bill 36. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Beaudin, Marcel
Boushy, Dave
Brown, Jim
Carr, Gary
Clement, Tony
Danford, Harry
Doyle, Ed
Elliot, Brenda
Fisher, Barbara
Flaherty, Jim
Ford, Douglas B.
Fox, Gary
Gall, Doug
Gilchrist, Steve
Grimmett, Bill
Guzzo, Gary J.
Harris, Michael D.
Hastings, John
Hodgson, Chris
Hudak, Tim
Jackson, Cameron
Johnson, Helen
Johnson, Bob
Johnson, David
Jordan, W. Leo
Kleis, Morley
Kleis, Frank
Leach, Al
Martinuk, Gerry
Maves, Bart
McLean, Allan K.
Munro, Julia
Murdoch, Bill
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Parker, John L.
Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Runciman, Robert W.
Sampson, Rob
Saunderson, William
Sheehan, Frank
Snobelen, John
Spina, Joseph
Stewart, R. Gary
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tilson, David
Turnbull, David
VanKoughnet, Bill
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Wood, Bob

Nays

Agostino, Dominic
Bisson, Gilles
Boyd, Marion
Bradley, James J.
Caplan, David
Chuthey, Marilyn
Cleary, John C.
Colle, Mike
Cordiano, Joseph
Cullen, Alex
Duncan, Dwight
Gerstein, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hoy, Pat
Komos, Peter
Lalonde, Jean-Marie
Lessard, Wayne
McGurny, Dalton
McLeod, Lyn
Mielash, Frank
Morin, Gilles E.
Patten, Richard
Pupatello, Sandra
Ramsey, David
Ruprecht, Tony
Serio, Mario
Widman, Bud
Wood, Len

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): The ayes are 52; the nays are 28.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 22, 1998, this bill is ordered for third reading, to be considered immediately.

Mr Hodgson moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to amend the Election Act and the Election Finances Act, and to make related amendments to other statutes / Projet de loi 36, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale et la Loi sur le financement des élections et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): Mr Speaker, I believe there is all-party agreement to split the time equally among the parties. **The Speaker:** All-party agreement? Agreed.

Hon Mr Hodgson: It's a pleasure to join in the debate on third reading on this important piece of legislation. I've been listening to the debate over the last couple of weeks and I'm pleased to be able to set the record straight on a couple of issues.

As has been mentioned, I see the member for Windsor-Walkerville is here tonight and he said quite distinctly a few days ago, "We ought not be surprised, because everything we've heard tonight so far twists, distorts and selectively uses comments and quotes out of context." That's why I'm here tonight, because the opposition have done exactly that, and we'd like to put this back into some context.

The same member also claimed that I was avoiding the debate because I have been in question period each day. To the member for Windsor-Walkerville, I've been in question period each day, but I have also been following this debate and I'm pleased to be here tonight.

Interruptions.

The Speaker: Order. Can the members, if you're actually going to step out, step out. If you're going to meet, step out.

Hon Mr Hodgson: It's very hard to hear in here to tonight.

The legislation that we've introduced reflects the work that has been done by representatives from all parties who have worked together for the last number of years. As you know, Mr Speaker, this piece of legislation —

Interruptions.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I realize the opposition doesn't — **Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I must ask for a general ruling. Are people allowed to mislead the House? Is anybody —

The Speaker: You know what? That's out of order.

Mr Bradley: Is anybody allowed? That's what I'm asking you.

The Speaker: Member —

Interruption.

The Speaker: Yes, well. That is also out of order — **Mr Bradley:** It's a theoretical question.

The Speaker: — and both those comments need to be withdrawn. Member for St Catharines.

Mr Bradley: I will be happy to withdraw my theoretical question.

The Speaker: No, no. You must withdraw it. I see it as a veiled attempt to do —

Mr Bradley: Yes, of course, I'm happy to withdraw it.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Kendale): I guess I could withdraw it, Speaker.

The Speaker: I'm not looking for a guess; I'm looking for a withdrawal.

Mr Hastings: Withdrawn.

The Speaker: This is turning into world wrestling.

Member for Rexdale, in the future withdrawal is simply

"Withdrawn," Minister.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I realize the members of the opposition don't want to hear the facts around this issue, but let me try to recount a little bit of the modern history that I know. I know my colleague across the way from the Liberal Party would like everyone to hear the facts, for those who might be watching this on TV.

The fact is that the Election Finances Act and the Election Act itself haven't been changed in 12 years. It was recognized by all members of this Legislature and others who are involved in the election processes in Ontario that the act needed to be updated and modernized. That's why back in 1991 all the parties agreed to set up an ad hoc committee to study changes to modernize and adjust the Election Act.

The ad hoc committee had a representative from the Liberal Party. I see the member of the Liberal Party heckling here tonight. Barbara Sullivan was your MPP who was your representative on that committee. The ad hoc committee reported to the members of the Legislature with a signed memorandum of agreement. As well, there was another process that was set up recognizing in the early 1990s that the act still needed to be modernized.

Politicians hadn't had the courage to enact the changes that would save taxpayers' dollars, modernize the rules, like other provinces have, like the federal government has, and they set up an election commission that had two representatives from each of the parties. The Liberals had two representatives, two representatives were appointed from the NDP to represent their caucus and two representatives were appointed from our party to represent our caucus. They chose a chair, Jack Murray, past party president of the New Democrats. They reported as well to the Legislature with a signed memorandum where they had all agreed.

We could sit around and debate for another eight years and watch the Liberal Party disown their own representative each time because they'd rather play politics on something that they know should happen. That's why they've suggested processes to reform and modernize the Election Act, but then want to disown, hoping against all hope it will pass. At the same time as these two all-party groups signed agreements recommending change, the chief election officer tabled a report with the Legislature last month recommending changes that would modernize the election process, reduce bureaucracy and save the taxpayers' money.

The last eight years have been long enough. We would have liked to have all-party consent like we had at one time in this Legislature when we had a minority government. It has only happened once in the history of Ontario. Unfortunately, we were unable to get to all-party agreement. Some parties went out prior to even having discussions among our caucuses on these reports to hold press conferences and try to politicize the issue. It was unfortunate that we were unable to arrive at a consensus that we could all agree with and endorse. It would have been my intent to see that we could have gone forward in that manner. However, like four other provinces in Canada, our government had to act alone on this to modernize and to make sure that we keep up to save the taxpayers' dollars and to streamline the process and to take advantage of new technologies and how we run and conduct elections.

Mr Murray, who was the chair of this election commission and made recommendations, clearly gave advice in January to this House through the Speaker. What he talked about was the need to act. He said, "It would be unfair if you didn't act on this quickly, before an election, to give all the people that are involved in elections time to adjust." I quote his recommendation in his letter to the Legislature, "The commission, parties, constituency associations, volunteers and chartered accountants must have sufficient time to become familiar with changes in the legislation before the next election." That is why, although we wanted to have all-party agreement, we feel it's necessary to act now in lots of time before the next election to give all those who are involved in elections time to adapt and to understand the rules.

Some of the recommendations made by the commission were clearly intolerable to the opposition. Even though they were unwilling to sit down and discuss the issues, they made a number of public statements about what they would accept. We would have liked to have had all-party agreement, but given the fact that they wouldn't negotiate on that, and without making our caucus surrender its right to have an equal say, what we had to do was take from these public statements, these written statements that are on the record. The commission recommended —

Mr Bradley: On a point of privilege, Speaker: The minister has accused the opposition of not negotiating, and our contention would be that our privileges are affected by this because of course we were quite prepared to negotiate but they already had the bill written.

The Speaker: That's no point of privilege, Minister.

Hon Mr Hodgson: That's not accurate either. We had a couple of meetings that I thought were good and it was my hope that we could reach an agreement on it. The bill

was not written. There were changes made right up to the

Monday.

Having said that, what was on the record was the

Liberal Party's recommendation to accept the federal

spending limits for elections. As you know, the commis-

sion recommended \$1.80 per voter. The Leader of the

Opposition said, "He wants to raise spending limits dou-

ble from what they are now...they don't have to go any

higher than the federal spending limits." We agreed with

the leader of the Liberal Party and we put that in the

legislation. The federal limit for total spending is \$1.56,

and guess what? That's what the legislation says.

The opposition wants to focus only on the increase in

the central party spending from 40 cents per voter to

60 cents per voter. To my colleagues in the opposition,

that's exactly what the feds spent in the 1997 election.

Over and over the Liberal Party kept telling the media that

they wanted the federal spending limits adopted. Talk

about cherry-picking. The total federal spending limit is

\$1.56 per voter and, let me repeat, that is what is in our

bill.

Last week the member for St Catharines said in his

debate, "Massive increases in election campaign spending,

dramatic increases in the amount of money that corpora-

tions and individuals may contribute to political parties

and candidates will ensure that the deck is stacked." We

took all the federal spending limits, as they asked, but we

did not accept the federal contribution limits because, as

you know, the federal elections do not have any limits on

their contributions.

Maybe they feel that's acceptable, but our caucus cer-

tainly doesn't feel we should go to the federal rules of

having no limits on contributions. We put in limits

because we don't accept the Liberal position that it's

acceptable to have no contribution limits whatsoever.

Even the chair of the commission, Jack Murray, the NDP

past president, recognized the inequity in the current

funding formula for elections: "Spending limits in the

1995 election ranged from \$2.03 per voter in Rainy River

to 51 cents in York Centre."

I would like to clarify the issues. We've gone to the

fewer politicians that the opposition parties voted against,

to get it so that in Ontario we have the same number of

MPPs as we have federal members of Parliament; we've

gone to similar-sized ridings, and it will be clear for peo-

ple to understand how many dollars per voter are allowed.

I would also like to clarify the issue of excluding travel,

polling and research from the spending limits. Polling and

research were included in the spending limits only once

since 1975. For those watching on television, that's when

since 1975 have polling and research been included, and

that was the period from 1994 to 1996.

The commission recommended in 1996 that these items

be excluded based on "included expenses should reflect

expenses that directly promote or help in the election of a

candidate." As most people in Ontario know, in the last

election the Liberal Party outspent the Conservative Party

on polling five to one. So I guess it's safe that the commis-

sion is right that ruling out polling as an expense could

help candidates win an election.

The commission recommended the exclusion of travel.

The reason, quite simply, is because not all ridings are of

the same size. The size of a riding and its relative travel

costs should not prevent a candidate from running an

effective campaign. I believe this favours our current

members.

Legislating these items will ensure consistency, fairness

and transparency. Those are the rules today, that's what

was recommended by the commission and that's what we

put in the legislation so it can't be played with back and

forth.

I do want to point out that these items are still report-

able and reviewed by an auditor, and then reviewed by the

chief election officer, and that's the way it is today. That's

how we know that the Liberal Party outspent our party

five to one on polling. If you read the bill, you will see that

everything that is spent is audited. Whether it's the

amount for ads or for polling, it's all auditable and

reported, open and transparent so the public can see it

precisely.

The members opposite claim that the legislation helps

us stack the deck because we've raised more money and

the incumbents have an advantage. Let me remind the

members that incumbency didn't help anyone in 1985 or

1990 or 1995. In fact, this party was \$2 million in debt

going into the last election. What helped our party in the

1995 campaign was the fact that we put our platform out

to the public for full public scrutiny and a full year in

advance of the election. We didn't know when the election

would be called.

I think it's important to remind the members opposite

that voters cannot be bought. They are interested in what a

candidate's policies are, and I encourage the members to

concentrate on communicating their policies to Ontarians.

The Leader of the Opposition in question period a cou-

ple of weeks back said that politics shouldn't be about

money, and I agree. He went on to say it should be about

policies and ideas and where we want to take public policy

in the future, and I agree with him on that. I'm not person-

ally aware of their financial situation, but I can tell you

that on their policy platform they are bankrupt and they

need to get their ideas and their policies out there to the

public so that the public can choose.

It has been a pleasure to join in the debate tonight. I

think that people realize when they look at this in a fair

manner that we have to continue like the province of Brit-

ish Columbia and three other provinces in the federation,

that there is a need to modernize the Election Act. It will

save taxpayers \$15 million.

Interruptions.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I hear the opposition scoff. Well,

\$15 million is a lot of money that could be used more

effectively in this province.

It's with great pleasure that I conclude my debate. I'll

be sharing my time later on tonight with my colleagues.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

Normally when I begin to join a debate my opening words have traditionally been, "It is my pleasure to join the debate." But I want to tell you that it is not a pleasure for me to join this debate. This bill and the history of this bill most recently since it has been introduced, perfectly in keeping with the bill that we just addressed, Bill 31, is not based on any kind of an understanding of democracy, certainly on the one that I have held, one that says that you have to give a substantial amount of time for the members of this Legislature to devote to debate. That has not been here.

If the minister was so proud of his baby, Bill 36, then why did he refuse, at the time it was introduced, to make a ministerial statement? Why is he ramming this bill through? Why will there be no public hearings? Why are no amendments permitted? If the minister is really so proud of this particular bill and of all that it's going to do for democracy in Ontario, why is he hiding it? Why is he keeping it away from the light of day? I think the answer there is pretty obvious.

As politicians, we talk a lot about democracy and the importance of maintaining our democratic principles, and we often do so at Remembrance Day ceremonies when we remember all that has been sacrificed to protect our basic rights, but too often these fine words and eloquent speeches are taken for granted. People get lulled into a false sense of security and begin to see democracy as something akin to motherhood, something that is unassailable. Certainly I suspect that most Ontarians believe democracy could never be attacked in our province, in Ontario, from within this Legislature — that could never possibly happen. I'm here tonight to tell you, to tell the members opposite, to tell the viewers that I believe that this government bill threatens the basic democratic principles that we have used to govern ourselves here in this province for decades.

Quite simply, I believe that this legislation, combined with the House rule changes we have experienced, threatens to make a mockery of the democracy we are all here to protect, something the members opposite obviously don't understand. They threaten to make a mockery of the democracy which we are to protect and which is here to protect all of us.

For democracy to work, for elections to be fair, there needs to be a level playing field. That's why, for example, we've got spending limits in the province, spending limits to govern our election campaigns, but for spending limits to make a difference, they've got to be real. That means expensive items like polling, focus groups and the leader's tour need to be included in that limit. This bill removes all spending limits on those areas, and in the areas where there are spending limits, this bill dramatically increases those, by over \$1.3 million. Mike Harris is going to turn the next election into the largest seat sale in Canada's history. If Mike Harris has his way, the next election will be a seat sale where seats in this Legislature won't be won on the basis of who has the best ideas; if Mike Harris has

his way, they'll be won on the basis of who has the most money to spend.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Members for Humber and York-Mackenzie, come to order. The member has the floor and has the right to make his speech.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Member for York-Mackenzie, I don't want to have a discussion about it. He has the right to make his speech. That's a given. Member for Etobicoke-Rexdale as well. Leader of the official opposition.

Mr McGuinty: If the members opposite have such a profound interest in expressing their views on this bill, then the question I have to ask myself is, where were they when their House leader, the minister and Mike Harris said, "We are ramming this bill through and there's not going to be any time for full debate?"

I want to go back to this notion of a seat sale. I want people to understand that the problem is that Mike Harris has already begun in terms of advancing the seat sale. He is spending millions of taxpayers' dollars to try and buy votes in this province. This is something that he is shameless about, and the degree to which it is taking place is without precedent.

He is spending \$1.3 million on a pamphlet issued by the Ministry of Health. We don't have money in Ontario for nurses; in fact, we have the lowest number of nurses available in the country on a per capita basis right here in Ontario. We don't have money for nurses, but we've got \$1.3 million for a pamphlet. We've got another pamphlet here issued from the Premier's office for \$700,000. We don't have in Ontario money to send disabled kids to summer camp, but we've got \$700,000 for a pamphlet to be issued by the Premier's office.

Here's another pamphlet issued by the Premier's office. This one cost taxpayers \$750,000. We don't have money for our classrooms, we don't have money to make junior kindergarten mandatory or available in every single community in the province, but we've got \$750,000 for that particular piece of Tory propaganda. And we have just learned today that there is more still to come. The Solicitor General is getting into the act. He is going to increase his advertising budget by over \$400,000. We don't have enough money for cops in Ontario, but we're going to have plenty for copies of self-serving government flyers.

Mike Harris is trying to sell this legislation by telling us that this bill adopts, quite simply, the federal spending limits, and that, as you well understand, is simply not what this bill does. This bill increases the spending limits for the central campaign from \$2.7 million to over \$4 million. That is \$800,000 higher than the federal limits in Ontario. Let's take a look at the minister's own riding of Victoria-Haliburton. Under the current rules, a candidate in that riding could spend \$53,000 during the course of a provincial election campaign; under the federal rules, that candidate could spend \$67,000; but under this new legislation the minister, in his own riding, is going to be able to spend \$75,000. On top of that \$75,000, there is no limit

whichever when it comes to the amount that the minister will be able to spend on polling and his research expenses. In fact, what the minister wanted to do was to ensure that the limit when it came to provincial campaigns in Ontario was not \$53,000 or \$67,000, the federal limit, or \$75,000, the new provincial limit; they wanted to make it at least \$100,000. The only reason that they pulled back from that was that my party set up 103 chairs on the front lawn of the Ontario Legislature and they were shamed into pulling back. That's the only reason they pulled back. They didn't pull back because they saw the light; they pulled back because they felt the heat. They didn't do it because it was the right thing to do; they did it because they felt that they were being shamed into it and they had no option.

The bottom line quite simply is that Mike Harris is trying to buy the next election. He wants to stack the deck in his favour. He is changing the rules so that they suit him. People shouldn't be fooled by the minister's words spoken here this evening and they should not be fooled by what the Premier has been saying about this bill. This bill isn't an effort to streamline, it's not an effort to save money, it's not an effort to bring about improvement in democracy, it's not an effort to make elections somehow simpler, neater and tidier; it's an effort on the part of the Premier to buy the next election. That's what this is all about.

2130

The three parties in this Legislature, it goes without saying, often disagree, and a collision of ideas in this place is an important part of a healthy working democracy. But that being said, we have a long and honourable tradition in this Legislature of working together when it comes to changes to the rules that govern our political campaigns. Until this point in time, until the advent of the Mike Harris government, that was an important principle of our democracy, and we honoured that because we believed that elections held in keeping with democratic principles were, for the lack of a better expression, an honourable sport, one where all the participants, all the players, could agree on a fair set of rules to ensure that no one party, but especially the governing party, could stack the rules in their favour. This legislation, in one fell swoop, changes all of that. Mike Harris is changing the rules. He's changing them on the fly. He's changing them in a way that's completely out of keeping with the traditions and precedents of this Legislature. He's changing them unilaterally. He's changing them without our consent. And he's doing it now without public hearings.

I go back to asking something I asked at the beginning of my remarks: If the government is so damn proud of Bill 36, if they believe it's such a positive improvement in how we conduct elections in Ontario, then why aren't they shouting out all of its wonderful aspects? Why aren't we having extended debates? Why aren't we having full public hearings? Again, it's simply because when it's amended to its simplest, the government is ashamed of what they're doing here. They are embarrassed. They're

changing the rules, they're stacking the deck so that they make it easier for themselves to win the next election. That's what this is all about.

The minister tries to justify these changes by pretending that they were put forward by the election finances commission. He said that on numerous occasions. The fact is that's not the case. The election finances commission recommended, and I quote, "Spending limits for parties: unchanged." The election finances commission said that there should be no changes to the spending limits for parties in Ontario. What did Mike Harris do? He ignored them. He decided, unilaterally and arbitrarily, to increase those limits by \$1.35 million. That's a 50% increase in party spending limits. On top of that \$1.35 million, I want to remind members opposite, he has excluded all the spending on polling, research and a leader's tour from any limits.

I think it would be instructive to look at what the Tories spent in 1997. What did their party spend in 1997? When it came to polling, they spent \$609,000. When it came to travel, they spent \$352,000. In 1997, they spent nearly \$1 million on polling and travel alone. That was a non-election year. They spent \$1 million of expenses which, under the new system, the system they're putting into place, will not be accounted for. There will be no obligation to include those and they'll be subject to no limit. I remind members and Ontario voters that the commission never approved that; in fact, they opposed that. The election finances commission said there should be no changes to the amounts of money that can be spent by a party.

I have said that these changes, together with many other changes taking place in our province, will lead to the Americanization of Ontario politics. Let me tell you why. As the sky is now the limit on polling, research and focus groups, I can guarantee you that there will be a dramatic increase in the importance of pollsters, backroom advisers, lobbyists and advertising agents. I want the members opposite, as well as viewers, to ask themselves, is that a good thing for democracy or is it a bad thing for democracy? Will this lead to more and better ideas or will it lead to more and better ways to manipulate voters?

With the dramatic increase in spending, there's going to be a dramatic increase in fund-raising. That means there's going to be a greater reliance on money and those who give us money. Again I ask members opposite, as well as viewers, is that a good thing for democracy or is that a bad thing for democracy? Does this create fewer or greater opportunities for conflicts of interest?

It's important for members opposite to understand this and understand the answers to those questions, especially at a time when they have refused to introduce into this Legislature legislation that would require that lobbyists be registered so we know who's lobbying the government, what they're after and who they're talking to. The government refuses and we should understand that there is a connection here.

On the one hand, this government is going against the advice and recommendations of the election finances

commission by increasing the amount of money that parties can spend in Ontario, and on the other hand, they are refusing to introduce legislation on which is in place, as I understand it, in every other province and at the federal level — that would require lobbyists in Ontario, people who are earning a living lobbying the government, they are refusing to introduce legislation that would disclose to these people are and what they're after.

People should understand the relationship between the absence of that legislation and this legislation, on the other hand, which is going to increase the amount of money that parties can spend in Ontario. Members opposite should understand, they should recognize — they already have a history when it comes to this stuff — the kind of trouble that you can get yourself into without lobbyist legislation and when you allow for an ever-growing influence of money in Ontario politics.

What about this issue of the Niagara casino contract? Would we be there today and what does the future hold for us if the government refuses to respect and to understand the trouble politicians can get themselves into when they don't pay attention to the ever-growing influence of money in Ontario politics?

What about Ontario Hydro? Now there is an opportunity, if ever I saw one, for money to be made. Again, this government simply refuses to acknowledge the dangers that lurk behind that privatization experience. As we move down that path, the only conclusion that we can draw from the government that ignores a recommendation from the election finances commission and proceeds to increase the amount of money the parties can spend, from a government that refuses to introduce legislation that would require that lobbyists be registered, and from a government that has failed to learn from the Niagara casino contract, is that this government is quite simply in favour of an ever-growing influence of money in Ontario politics. They are in favour of the Americanization of Ontario politics. That's what they're all about. That's what they want.

Interjection.
The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, please.

Mr McGuinty: I said at the time — *Interjection.*
The Acting Speaker (Mr Bud Wildman): At the outset, I would like to request unanimous consent to split the time with my colleague from London Centre.

Mr McGuinty: I indicated that I believed it was a companion piece in a sense to this bill, Bill 36, the changes to the Election Finances Act. Certainly in process they're very similar. The government has decided unilaterally in Bill 36 to bring in changes that have a significant effect on the electoral system, the electoral process and indeed on our democracy in Ontario. Bill 31, of course, made changes in the way that votes are conducted in organizations drives by the labour movement and decisions made with regard to collective bargaining, particularly in the construction industry.

Mr McGuinty: To the members opposite who are expressing an interest in speaking to this legislation, and where were they when their House leader, their minister for full and thorough debate, there will be no time for public hearings and there will be no amendments that will be even considered when it comes to this legislation.

I said when this bill was first introduced — and at the time it was very interesting, it was introduced under the cover of another very significant bill, and that was the Hydro bill — that the bully was back. He'd gone missing for a time. After the throne speech, apparently this government was going to be kinder and gentler, it was going to listen and it was finally going to be beholden to the public interest. Well, that didn't last very long because the bully is back. He's alive and well and he's found inside Bill 36. Once again, Mike Harris and his government are displaying their contempt for democracy, their contempt for fairness and their contempt for some of the basic, what should have been lasting traditions of this Legislature.

2140
We're talking about changes here that are unilateral. They're one-sided. They've changed the Election Finances Act and they've threatened to Americanize our system of elections in Ontario. They threaten to make the influence of money on our politicians even greater than it already is. Something the government doesn't understand is that democracy at the end of the day is really quite a fragile thing. It may be something the Harris government takes for granted, but it's something that those of us on this side of the House respect and indeed cherish.
Campaigns are supposed to be a battle over ideas, not a competition over who can spend more. So I'm going to ask government members to ask themselves: Do you really think what you're about to do is fair? Do you really think this bill will better serve democracy? Do you really think ideas are always more important than money? I think the resounding answer to all of those questions is no.
This bill is all about money. It's all about who can raise the most. It's all about who can spend the most. It's all about who can buy the election. It's all about giving Mike Harris an unfair advantage at the time of the next election. But there is some good news. All is not lost. The good news is that the people of Ontario, the voters of this province are going to see through this transparent attempt to buy them off at the time of the next election. I can tell you that this bill, in combination with so many others that have been introduced in this Legislature and passed, is going to be one good reason why the Mike Harris government is going to be defeated at the time of the next election.
Mr Bud Wildman (Algonia): At the outset, I would like to request unanimous consent to split the time with my colleague from London Centre.

The Acting Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

I see these as companion pieces because, as I indicated, the process is so similar and they both deal with the government's perception of democracy. In both cases, the bills are very controversial. In both cases, the government claims that the legislation is supported by the majority of the participants in the process. Indeed, they argue that in both cases the origin of the bills was related to consultations among the participants. In the case of Bill 31, they point to a recommendation or a proposal that was made in July 1997 by the construction unions for what are called project agreements. In the case of Bill 36, the Election Finances Act, the government points to a recommendation that was made by an all-party commission, the election expenses commission in Ontario. In that particular case, the government minister in charge, the minister for Man-agement Board, is wont to say on many occasions that the government party only has a minority of the members and therefore these are proposals that are put forward essentially by the opposition in this House.

But in both cases, the government, in drafting these pieces of legislation, has gone far beyond what was proposed initially by the participants. In the case of Bill 31, the government threw everything but the kitchen sink into the bill in order to ensure that management's rights, if you want to use that term, were enhanced and the role of the labour movement and workers to enable them to bargain collectively was restricted. In the case of Bill 36, yes, it is true the commission did hold hearings or hold discussions among themselves, I should say, and came forward with proposals which would have taken into account changes in inflation, changes in the electoral map in Ontario and the need to update the Election Finances Act.

But again, the government went much further. The government brought forward proposals that would shorten the length of the campaign period in Ontario, a recommendation that was not proposed by the commission and never even considered by the commission. On top of that, the —

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe we don't have a quorum.

The Acting Speaker: Please check if we have quorum.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Algoma.

Mr Wildman: I appreciate the members coming to listen to the debate.

As I was saying, the government went beyond the recommendations and brought forward proposals which went far beyond what the commission recommended. One of the proposals that was brought forward by the government was to shorten the campaign period. The minimum campaign period would now be 28 days rather than 37 days in Ontario. Before I move forward, I'd like to comment just briefly on the shortening of the campaign period. One of the arguments that has been made by the government for the need for change to the Election Act is the fact that we now have fewer members, or will have in the next election fewer members in Ontario and much larger constituencies. In southern Ontario many of the constitu-

encies will have many more people, and in many parts of rural and particularly northern Ontario they will be very large geographically. The government has said, "These are larger ridings. We need to update the act in order to take into account that we have fewer larger ridings in Ontario."

"It would seem to me that if that is the real reason, then we shouldn't be shortening the campaign period, we should be doing everything possible to ensure that members can get around to all of their constituents, that candidates can get around to all of the people living in the riding as much as possible and, certainly in the large geographic ridings, should be able to get to the communities. If we are going to change the length of the campaign period, and I don't think there needs to be a change, but if we were going to make that change, we should be lengthening the campaign period, not shortening it, for larger ridings."

2150

The argument has been made: "We're not just changing the Election Finances Act, we're updating it. We should take into account new electronic means to reach the voters." The problem with that, and it's a serious problem, is that in many of these large geographic ridings there is no media outlet, whether it is electronic or print, that reaches most of the constituents. There are very few media outlets that cover the whole riding. In my riding of Algoma-Manitoulin, the northwestern part of the riding is served by the Thunder Bay media, the central by the Sault Ste Marie media and the southeastern part of the riding by the Sudbury media.

What this inevitably means, and what the government seems to be talking about, is that the Conservative Party intends to concentrate centrally and have a large media buy for the whole of Ontario. This means less concentration, less emphasis on the individual ridings or constituencies and more on the central campaign. Inevitably that means a greater concentration on the leadership campaigns and less on the individual campaigns in the ridings with the various candidates.

Obviously in the age of television we already have a tendency to emphasize leadership campaigns rather than the exchange of ideas. Unfortunately, the media tend to see elections as some sort of horse race. They're more into who's ahead and who's behind and who's doing well and who isn't, in terms of the speed of getting to the finish line, rather than the ideas, the campaign promises and the policy differences of the parties. I fail to see why anyone who really believes in the democratic process would want to speed that process further, so that we get away from dealing with ideas and policies and more into campaign leadership horse races.

I think the evidence that the Conservatives really want to emphasize the provincial campaign is shown in the other changes they are making. The fact is that the government is exempting a lot of things. Sure, they've increased the ceilings. They've accepted, they say, the federal limits, because they now have the federal bound-

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Transportation):

There are 30 million people in the state.

Mr Wildman: It's certainly true that we're talking about a state that has a total population about the same size as the whole of Canada, but I'm just talking in terms of the magnitude of expenditures.

I think we should look at the United States experience. There is not one member of the US Senate who is not himself or herself a millionaire. The fact is that personal wealth is now one of the main qualifications for electoral success in the United States. I admire the democracy of the United States. I admire the institutions of the congressional system, but there is one part of the American system that I find very alarming and dangerous, and that is the fact that money talks in the American system. You cannot win unless you're wealthy. You can't even get into the door unless you're wealthy.

Mrs Marton Boyd (London Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't believe we have a quorum.

The Acting Speaker: Is there a quorum?

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Algoma.

2200

Mr Wildman: Thank you very much. I appreciate my colleague's calling for a quorum. I just hope the fact that there are so many Tory members absent and having to be called back in is not a reflection on the quality of my presentation.

I was saying that I'm concerned if we look at the American system, the influence of funding, not just campaign funds but even personal wealth, in determining whether an individual can place his name or her name before the public in running for office, and while I admire the American democracy, I don't think that is an aspect of it that we want to import into Canada.

Hon Mr Clement: That is why we have spending limits.

Mr Wildman: The other thing that is worrisome to me is that partly because of the fact that in the United States there is so much emphasis on wealth and funds in determining the electoral process, we have a concomitant fall in the interest in elections in the United States. We now have a situation where, at the most, only about 50% of the population votes in federal elections. It's less in state elections and it's abysmal in municipal elections. While we have the greatest democracy in the world, we don't have the true participation of the citizens of that democracy in the electoral process. That then raises the question of whether it is really a democracy in terms of the process. Some would argue that it is more of a plutocracy because of the influence of wealth in the process.

My friend the Minister of Transportation says, "That's what we have spending limits," and it is true that this government maintains spending limits in these changes. But as I said, the government allows for increases in

aries, but we know that the federal limits in Ontario are

actually somewhat lower than the proposals here. But what is more important to me than the increases in the expenditure limits or the approved doubling of the contributions by corporations to campaigns is the fact that in this bill the government is exempting so much of the central campaign from any of the limits. The Conservative Party wants to have the leader's tour, the travel expenses, the polling, the research, the consultants' fees — essentially large parts of advertising — exempted from any expenditure limits. It means also that the central campaign will be able to be doubled. The sky is the limit on most of the expenditures.

I suppose some people watching, and perhaps even a few Conservative backbenchers, might think that the opposition is continually using apocalyptic terms in dealing with legislation and the fact that this government time-allocates, but we are talking about the very essence of democracy and the future of democracy in this province. When we were talking about Bill 31, we were talking about democracy in the workplace. I would point out that in that particular case the government is the one that raised the term by that Orwellian title the government put on the bill, "Democracy in the Workplace." By its very essence, the Election Finances Act deals with democracy and the exercise of democracy in this province.

I hope that people don't think we are crying wolf, that we are being apocalyptic or extreme when we talk about the future of democracy, because we are quite sincere when we talk about this and talk about it in these terms. The process itself is not democratic. The process is one where a government unilaterally decides to change the rules and the party that is in power is changing those rules in a way that will advantage that party in the coming campaign.

Most governments, whatever party is in power, have access to more funds in our system. This bill allows even higher contributions to be made. This bill allows larger expenses to be made under the ceiling, but more important, it exempts so much of what a central campaign does that it means that the party in power, in this case the Conservative Party, which is flush with dollars, will be able to spend so much money that it is indeed dangerous to our democracy. It means that it is possible for a government party to gain power simply because or largely because it has access to more funds and can spend more money in an election campaign.

It has been said in this debate that it doesn't necessarily follow that if a party spends the most money that party will win, and that's certainly true. There's no question about that. The recent California campaign has been pointed to as an example of the fact that you had a very wealthy individual running for one of the parties, who spent enormous amounts, millions of dollars of his own funds, and didn't win, but the irony of that is that the person who lost spent about \$20 million, I think, and the person who won spent \$2 million. We're still talking about millions of dollars.

evaluate them, a government that is going to move forward without any hearings, without any input from the public.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I think we've heard this speech.

Mr Wildman: Yes, you've heard it before because you operate this way all the time in this House.

Mr Gerritsen: Come on, you give the same speech every day in here.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Kingston and The

Islands.

Mr Wildman: Yes, you've heard it. You've heard it too often. We have a government here that isn't interested in hearing the public, and I don't understand why, because if they really believe in democracy, then they should be trying to hear what the citizens of this province think.

Mr Galt: Why don't you just —

The Acting Speaker: Member for Northumberland, you don't have the floor.

Mr Wildman: He also doesn't have a brain.

The Acting Speaker: Order. The member for Algonia, I find this offensive.

Mr Wildman: In due respect to you, I will withdraw.

The Acting Speaker: Just withdraw it, thank you.

Mr Wildman: I withdrew. The member over there laughs because he is, I guess, showing disdain for the process here and for the members of the opposition and that is why I expressed my true feelings about him as well.

So here we are. We have time-allocated a bill that is going to affect the electoral process in this province, is going to affect the rights of all citizens of the province, is going to affect the ability of people to put themselves forward as candidates, is going to make it possible for people with money to influence the electoral process even more than they now do, and we are not going to have any hearings, we're not going to have any amendments and the government is going to force it through without any committee discussion.

2210

This is not an indication of a government that is interested in listening to the people or to the opposition. It is not a government that's interested in trying to reach consensus. It is a government that knows more than anybody else, in its view, and is prepared to move its agenda forward despite what may or may not be good for the future of the democracy in this province.

We're not being apocalyptic. We're not crying wolf. We're simply trying to defend the rights of the opposition and the rights of the citizens of Ontario to protect what have come to value, and that is a democratic system that allows at least some chance for everyone to participate in the political process, no matter how much money they have in the bank.

Mr Bill Grismett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): I'm pleased to join third reading debate on Bill 36. I thought I'd first address the issue of the length of the campaign. That issue has been raised by the member for Algonia. Certainly on second reading as well there has been fairly lively debate on the issue of the length of the campaign.

expenditures and, more important, is exempting most of central campaigns do. As a result of that, the sky is the limit on those expenditures.

Having said all that, I want to emphasize that I believe we should proceed with changes to the Election Finances Act carefully, that we should do that through a process of consultation and discussion, that we should follow the examples of the 1970s and 1980s and try to arrive at consensus.

In his presentation the minister argued that the opposition parties did not want to negotiate. That is not accurate. The fact is we had two meetings. The opposition parties, our party certainly, indicated clearly that we wanted to have further meetings and further discussions, and I will tell you — I'm not betraying any confidence at all — that the very day that the government introduced the bill, five minutes prior to the minister's introducing the bill, I was out in the lobby talking to him. I was overheard, as a matter of fact, by a reporter. I said to the minister, "Look, we're prepared to have further discussions on the election expenses commission changes," and the minister said to me, "Well, maybe we can talk about it at House leaders." This was on Tuesday. That House leaders' meeting takes place on Thursday. He said, "We can talk about it at the House leaders' meeting."

I don't know how anybody interprets that, except I interpret it to mean, "Okay, we're going to have further discussions and we'll talk about it on Thursday." The minister, though, to be fair said — I want to tell you exactly what he said — "But we do have to introduce the bill." I said, "Okay, fine, we'll talk about it on Thursday." Five minutes later the minister was in this House introducing the bill. I ask you, my mother, when I was a child, told me that honesty and integrity involve not just telling the truth but telling the whole truth.

Mr John Gerritsen (Kingston and The Islands): So he was not telling the whole truth.

Mr Wildman: I just leave it at that. The fact is that the minister, five minutes before he introduced the bill, was indicating to me we would have discussions about it two days later.

All the members of this House are honourable members, I hope. I hope that, despite our differences, they deal with each other in honesty. I hope that members are forthright. The Chair of Management Board, in my experience, was straight with me, even when we had differences. If the minister intended to introduce the bill a few minutes after our discussion, Speaker, I ask you —

Mr Gerritsen: Why didn't he say so?

Mr Wildman: Why didn't he say so? It's not as if I could do anything about it.

On top of that, we now have time allocation and we have no hearings. We have unilateral action by this government moving forward without consensus, without real negotiation, without any attempt to deal with the concerns of the opposition, and we have a government that is prepared to move forward without any amendments, not to deal with any concerns raised by the opposition, not to

the Peterborough paper, that they felt 28 days was a reasonable length of time.

I thought I would also direct some comments to the Leader of the Opposition and by the member for Algoma, who has announced tonight that he'll be running in Algoma-Manitoulin in the next election. That may not be newsworthy, I want to indicate to those watching at home that Bill 36 proposes to adopt the federal spending limits, both for individual candidates and for central parties.

The recent report put out by Elections Canada on the 1997 spending limits in federal ridings indicates that for those parties that fielded candidates in 301 federal electoral districts, when you divide the total amount of money the central party is allowed to spend by the number of eligible voters, it works out to just over 60 cents per voter in central party spending. I believe it's 60.57 cents. So the recommended spending for the central party under this proposed bill is lower than what currently exists at the federal level.

We've been saying all along that this bill makes sense because it adopts the federal expense levels. This was indicated earlier, in March 1998, by the Liberal member for Windsor-Walkerville in his letter to the government House leader, "If the federal expense limits were high enough for the recent federal election campaign, why are they not high enough for Mike Harris?" We agree with the member for Windsor-Walkerville.

We have agreed that rather than adopt the spending limits recommended by the election finances commission, which was \$1.40 per elector, we decided as well not to adopt limits that would reflect inflation which would have been about \$1.06 per voter, so we went to what the federal spending is per voter, of 96 cents per voter. We think that's reasonable and we think that's exactly what the Liberal position was in March 1998.

Of course those limits which we're fixing at 96 cents under the old rules have ranged, if you look back to the 1995 election, as widely as 51 cents in York Centre, which was the riding with the most eligible electors in 1995, to \$2.03 per voter in the Rainy River riding, which had the fewest eligible voters. We think there should be a narrower range and I understand that under this legislation, in addition to the 96 cents per voter, there is an added amount that can be spent by the parties in the larger northern Ontario ridings.

Another thing that I think is important to point out to the viewers is that through the debate we've had on this bill, one can sense there is actually a lot of consensus among the parties on a lot of the issues. The member from Algoma stated tonight that his feeling was that it isn't the party that spends the most money that wins the election, it's the party that has the strongest ideas. In fact the Leader of the Opposition indicated tonight that you can't buy votes, that it's the strength of the ideas that wins the votes. That was true in 1995 and I think that'll be true in the next election. We heard the evidence earlier in debate, and again from the member for Algoma tonight, of the recent

The member for Algoma raised a point similar to those that have been raised previously by some opposition members about the size of the ridings, that in Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act, in the last session this Legislature decided that in the next provincial election we would reduce the number of ridings from the current 130 to 103. That would result, especially in the rural areas, in larger ridings.

One of the reasons the government is anxious to proceed with Bill 36 is that, with the next election approaching, it makes sense to bring in reforms that recognize that not only are there fewer ridings now with a larger number of electors in each riding, but also that the election laws that deal with each of those ridings need to be brought up to date to recognize the changing size and the changing number of electors.

As I have said previously, and as I'll say again, I represent a large riding. It's not as big as the Algoma-Manitoulin and probably not nearly as big as the Algoma-Manitoulin riding that the member for Algoma indicates he'll be contesting in the next election, but it is a large riding. I assume that I will be running in the next election and that being the case, the riding will be even larger. However, I think it would probably take not 28 days but 228 days for me to get around to have a meaningful discussion of the issues in the election with all the people in that size of a riding. One has to ask, would the public be willing to put up with a campaign of that length? I think the obvious answer is no, the public would not want to have an election campaign that long.

The opposition have raised a lot of concern about the length of the campaign as though there is great public concern over that issue that's been raised in this bill. If I had heard from a lot of my constituents that they were concerned that the length of campaigns was not long enough, I might have some sympathy for that argument. I don't remember even a member of the media ever saying in Ontario, "That damned election just wasn't long enough." I don't know, maybe they have said that. Maybe people whose business benefits from what happens during an election campaign would feel that way.

But I know that prior to 1995, when I wasn't a member of a provincial political party, I followed elections quite closely but I don't remember ever really being wrapped in an election for the full 37 days or 42 days or whatever length of campaign they were. Quite frankly, I doubt there are many people in Ontario, aside from those who are directly involved in a campaign, who have the patience to put an awful lot of attention into a campaign that's longer than 28 days. However, it could be that the opposition members and I simply have a disagreement on that issue. My point is that I think the idea of reducing the campaign from 37 to 28 days probably has widespread public support. We've seen an indication from some of the daily papers in Ontario, including the Chatham daily paper and

California elections where some of the candidates spent unfathomable amounts of money and in many cases lost to candidates who had difficulty raising any money for the campaign because they were able to convince the voters that the ideas they had were worthy, more worthy perhaps than the ideas put forward by those candidates who had a lot of money to spend.

2220

I've certainly heard consensus in the debate that the idea of a permanent voters' list is one supported by all three parties. Bill 36 contains a number of items that could be categorized as non-controversial, probably non-newsworthy items. It bears repeating that the permanent voters' list is an idea that has been emphasized by the chief election officer in Ontario for quite some time.

There's not only the opportunity to incorporate the logic of the same system we have federally with the provincial system, just as we've done with the election riding boundaries; we could also have the same voters' list, keep it updated on a regular basis and save \$10 million per election. This is an idea that's already in place in British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec. The chief election officer is urging us to get this legislation passed so that he and his staff can get working on a permanent voters' list. The opposition, if I've read it correctly, have indicated that they think that's a good idea as well.

The idea of bringing in that temporarily absent voters are given the right to vote — if you are a Canadian citizen and were a permanent resident of Ontario for 12 consecutive months and you intend to return to Ontario, you could vote in a provincial election for up to two years while you're temporarily out of the province. This should open the voting process for individuals outside of Canada because of military service and for students living in a new riding. It would make the system simpler for those people. I think this is something the opposition likely will have little or no opposition to.

It's interesting that the Leader of the Opposition spoke tonight and gave quite a forceful speech. I thought, but didn't mention section 19 of the bill, which calls for the removal of the public posting of the voters' list in each polling division. Yet during the last session of this Parliament it was the Leader of the Opposition who put forward a private member's bill — in that session it was Bill 2 — that called for the same idea. We have implemented his idea into section 19 of the bill, and I was surprised he didn't speak to that issue. It really is a personal safety issue. Women and seniors no longer need to be concerned that just anyone can walk up to a telephone pole or a post office and know exactly where they live and that they live alone.

Section 4 of the bill provides for the testing of new election processes during by-elections. We recognize that technology is providing us with opportunities to conduct elections better and better, and section 4 would allow these new technologies to be tested during a by-election. The electors can be added to the voters' list right up to election day under section 18. If you bring the proper identification with you, everyone in Ontario who is eligi-

ble to vote will be able to register on election day. Previously this was really only done well in rural areas. I think that's again a non-controversial item in the bill, a sensible thing that probably all parties can agree to.

Section 62 in the bill, just to summarize, requires that all political advertising, regardless of whether it's a party, a candidate, an individual, unions, associations or corporations, must show who the sponsor of the advertising is. Registered charities can't make a political contribution in Ontario, under section 60. This again is an item that I don't think any of the parties objected to. When people give their money to a charity for charitable causes, they don't wish it to be used for political purposes, and it won't be allowed.

Section 65 of the bill deals with affiliated political organizations. They cannot accept donations. It's known as political soft money, and we've closed the door on that. Under the old system there was really no tracking of affiliated political organizations that receive money, and now it must go right through the party to ensure that there's a public disclosure of this money being raised. That raised an interesting point, one that has not been brought up in the debate tonight on third reading, and that is that this legislation requires contribution limits both to the individual candidate and to the party, something that is not provided for at the federal level. I think a lot of people would be surprised to know that there are no contribution limits at the federal level. It certainly came as a surprise to me.

Section 44 of the bill includes a new offence, bribery, and I think that speaks for itself.

Section 37: Rather than the old system, which required that if there was a close result one of the candidates would have to request a recount, under this legislation there's an automatic recount if the decision is fewer than 25 votes. I think that's a very sensible provision and one that probably wouldn't raise any controversy for any of the parties.

Section 14 provides simpler rules for proxy voting so that individuals who know they're not able to vote on election day can get a proxy. Before, a limited list of reasons had to be provided for the restricted use of proxies.

In summary, there is a lot in this bill that hasn't been mentioned in debate because it's generally agreed upon between the parties. However, when it comes to spending limits, we are, as was requested by the member for Windsor-Walkerville, adopting the federal spending limits. We're updating electoral legislation in Ontario for the first time since 1986, and we're doing it primarily on the basis of recommendations made by all-party committees and by a commission composed of representatives from all three parties.

Those are the comments I wish to make at this time.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): As I listened to the words of the minister who spoke earlier tonight, I couldn't help but think of Kipling's warning that you have to be able to "bear to hear the truth you've spoken twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools." Isn't that what this government's all about? That's what this

What about the party spending? I heard tonight on three occasions the government members say, "We've adopted the federal limits."

Mr Murdoch: That's what it's all about, isn't it?

Mr Duncan: Let me take a moment to review the formula for the government members like the member for Grey-Owen Sound, who tonight is on side with the government again, the member who conveniently abandons his party when it suits him and goes back when it doesn't. What is it, I say to the member for Grey-Owen Sound? Are you with them or are you against them? Where do you belong?

Mr Murdoch: I belong with my ratepayers, whatever they want. Sometimes they like it, sometimes they don't. That's the way it is.

Mr Duncan: The federal formula in this province sets up the following spending limits for central campaigns. The formula is very simple: 30 cents per voter times an inflation factor of 0.605, which results in a limit of \$3.2 million. I understand that that's complicated math for some of the members opposite, so I'll now explain to you the math behind the formula you're voting for, the formula that you think is the same, because I know that anything beyond simple arithmetic eludes you. Let's have a look.

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I fail to see quorum in the House.

The Acting Speaker: Do we have quorum in the House?

Clerk Assistant: Quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: Quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Windsor-Walkerville.

Mr Duncan: I want to review for the member for Grey-Owen Sound the mathematics again, because he doesn't understand it. I reviewed the current federal formula, which results in spending of \$3.2 million. What you're setting up is much simpler mathematics, and it goes 40 cents per voter. You take the number of voters and you multiply it by 40 cents, 0.40, and what does that result in? It results in a spending limit of \$2.7 million. That's the current.

What are we going to do in Ontario? What are we going to do to equalize with the federal formula? We're

going to move it to 60 cents, which results in expenditures of \$4 million, or \$800,000 more. So when you suggest or imply that you've adopted the federal limit, you're simply not getting the math properly. You're making a mistake in your arithmetic. It doesn't work. It's phoney. It's distorted. It's not accurate.

First, an \$800,000 advantage to the party with money. Then the government took a couple more steps. The government said: "We're also going to exclude, for limit purposes, two types of expenditures. We're going to exclude" — that means subtract — "the cost of polling and the cost of travel." Polling also includes research. That sounds innocuous enough until one looks at the government's political spending in the last year. Let's review that for a moment.

That's what the member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay tried to do to this debate tonight: to take the truth and wrap it in rhetoric and distort it, out of context and quite simply to not speak about the reality of the bill as it relates to expenditure, to try to spin it, to try to convince people that the government's doing something that in fact it's not doing.

But we ought not to be surprised at that. Mike Harris said they wouldn't close hospitals, didn't he? What are we up to now, 35? Another one today in Kingston, Hotel Dieu in Kingston — 36 hospitals. He said he wouldn't do that.

In the last election Mike Harris said they wouldn't touch classroom education. Wrong again. The list goes on and on and on. All the spin-meisters and all the money in the world that you're going to have to spend can't hide that very simple fact.

I want to review several provisions of the bill very briefly once again and reiterate the points that were made by the leader of my party, Dalton McGuinty, who shared this government into rejecting its own proposals about spending limits. They knew they couldn't proceed on what the House leader for the government said some months ago was going to happen.

Let's begin with the question of the length of a campaign period — simple to understand. It was said by the minister, it was said by other members opposite that this proposed change was recommended somewhere else. It was. It was recommended by the whiz kids. It certainly was part of the election finances commission report. It was not part of the ad hoc committee. It was not part of any formal recommendation anywhere. Where did it come from? It came from the whiz kids. It came from the purveyors of American politics in this province, the ones who want to raise the spending limits and shorten the length of campaigns, the ones who spent \$1.3 million this week on useless Tory government propaganda when they could have spent that money to provide more nurses in our hospitals, to provide more spots for junior kindergartens. That's what this is about. Unlike what the minister said, that key component of change came from nowhere other than the Premier's office.

2230 The sycophants on the other side, like the member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay, who will sit and read what he's told to read, and what the minister can say —

Interjection.

Mr Duncan: Obviously, the member for Guelph isn't even aware. She simply believed what was said. Check the facts and don't distort the facts. Don't suggest for one moment that this package was all recommended at one period of time or by one group. The fact remains that it was not. These recommendations were made over 10 years, quite apart from one another. When they really start to stink is when you put them all together, and when they are distorted.

In 1997 travel spending was \$352,000, which will now be excluded expenditures, which, by the way, as you'll know, Mr Speaker, because you're a man of much political experience, is a fairly small amount relative to a leader's tour during a campaign.

Polling: In 1997 the Ontario Conservative Party, the Mike Harris party, the Reform-a-Tories, spent \$609,000.

What does that total give you? It gives you a total, with the new formula, of \$5 million flat. Under the current rules, that same party, the Reform-a-Tories, could have spent \$2.6 million.

Interjection

The Acting Speaker: Member for Etobicoke-Humber. Mr Duncan: I know the math is a little difficult for those members, so let me tell you what the difference is.

That's when you subtract. You've said in here that the federal formula was the same as the provincial formula, and it's not. I understand that you can't do basic arithmetic. Let me tell you what the difference is. The difference is \$2.3 million, or an 86% increase.

Now, who is that going to benefit? Let's think. Is it going to benefit a party that raised \$2 million in one fund-raising dinner in Toronto? I would think it will. Will it benefit a party that shamelessly spends health care dollars for cheap political propaganda? I would think it will. This is the piece right here: \$1.3 million of nurses' salaries, of emergency room relief, of junior kindergartens — that's what it is. It's an absolute abomination. That's who these limits will benefit.

So when the minister and the members opposite get up and say that they've adopted the federal limits —

Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber): Tell the truth.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Member for Etobicoke-Humber, you're becoming a nuisance.

Mr Duncan: What happens? It means you spend more money. That will benefit you, so what the minister and the members opposite said — and I can't say they didn't tell the truth. That wouldn't be parliamentary. I can't say that they misled this House. That wouldn't be parliamentary. I can't say that they would knowingly distort and mislead electors. That wouldn't be parliamentary. I can say that you can't do your math, you can't do your simple arithmetic. You know what? That's sad, because what it results in is not only a less informed electorate but an unbalanced and unfair electoral system that benefits those who have versus those who don't.

When the government says it adopted the federal limits, they didn't. What they've done is distorted the reality of their own bill. It's unfortunate that for some reason the members opposite, who say they've adopted it, either can't read or can't do the math. It's that simple. It's very, very simple.

But as I said at the beginning of my remarks, we oughtn't to be surprised, because that's what this government is all about and that's what they're going to spend the additional money on. In addition to the wasted money on government propaganda, in addition to the money you've taken out of junior kindergartens and out of hospitals.

The people of this province will see through your game. They will see through the masquerade. They know what you're about. You're not about people in this province; you're about money. You're not about fairness in the electoral process; you're about winning at all costs. You're not about decent public debate; you're about jamming legislation through without debate. You're not about anything that has to do with the history of this province, a history of balance and fairness and moderation; you're about extremes. You're about everything that's wrong and corruptible about politics and people like you give us all a bad name because you insist on distorting the truth, on distorting reality.

This bill is yet another bill in a long, sad line of bills, a line of bills that we may or may not agree on but that are jammed through without debate, without committee hearings, without an opportunity for the public to participate. It's about stacking the deck. Whether it be against a welfare recipient in Windsor or against a hospital in Kingston, it's about that.

It has nothing at all to do with fair process and an improved electorate and improved democracy. It's about a sale. It's about a seat sale. It's about getting rid of the referee. It's about changing the rules. In my view it's utterly corrupt, it's utterly contemptible. You can laugh tonight and you can jam that through tonight, but the people of this province will jam this legislation and others like it right where the sun doesn't shine on you at the next election. I challenge you to leave this House tonight and have public hearings. Let's have a real debate and let's not try to buy elections. Let's have a fair and open electoral process in this province. This bill, like so many others, is an absolute abomination.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to participate one last time.

Mrs Boyd: I'm tempted to ask my colleague from Windsor-Walkerville, what does he really think? My goodness. The emotion, though, that he expresses I think is felt by most of us and by most of the people we associate with in our constituencies who care about democracy.

The reality of this whole process is just another in a long line of processes that this government has gone through that are eroding and chipping away at the democratic process in our province. It's a fascinating experience to have to spend hour after hour in this place which has so many fine traditions, which has seen the growth and the strength of democracy in this province, to be sitting here again at night watching this government trample over the democratic process.

It's really interesting. My friend from Windsor-Walkerville thought that by laying out the facts and actu-

and the hurry has caught people's attention. What is the

rush and the hurry?

Well, for those who are interested, it just may be that

all this rush and hurry is because we're going to have an election before January 1, 1999. I'm looking at subsection 82(1) of the bill, and many of you may not even know that subsection 82(1) is there. Let me read it to you:

"If the Legislature is dissolved after the day this act receives royal assent but before January 1, 1999, subsection 38(3) of the Election Finances Act shall be deemed to read as follows for the purposes of the general election.

"(3) In relation to candidates in the electoral districts of Kenora-Rainy River, Thunder Bay-Nipigon, Thunder Bay-Aitkowin, Timmins-James Bay, Algoma-Manitoulin, Nickel Belt and Timiskaming-Cochrane, the amount determined under subsection (2) shall be increased by \$5,000."

The public out there is saying, "What is this all about?" This is about the fact that the electoral districts have already been changed by the so-called Fewer Politicians Act, one of the first slams at democracy in this province, when this government decided that it was quite feasible for them to enlarge the responsibilities of members and continually try to cut back on the ability of members to represent. That's been a constant practice here. This provision in the act was to allow for a \$5,000 additional amount of money that could be spent on travel in these very large areas.

It's my guess that the reason this whole section had to be put in here is that one of the deep, dark plots that's been going on, of course, especially since the economy appears to be taking a nosedive — my, it seems like 1990 again.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepan): The economy seems to be taking a nosedive?

Mrs Boyd: Have you been reading all the concerns about the Asian flu? Did you hear the Prime Minister admit that economic growth was going to be considerably lower?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Mrs Boyd: We heard the Liberals —

The Acting Speaker: If you address the Chair, you

won't have any problem with them.

Mrs Boyd: Mr Speaker, you remember the spring and

summer of 1990, when the Liberals kept talking about how wonderful the economy was and it was just booming right along, and called an election when they saw what the indicators were doing. I want you to know that we will be watching very carefully, and it will strike panic into the hearts of people in Ontario if this government, with its large majority, with its clear ability to thrust through this place anything it wants to do, goes early to an election. The people in Ontario will know what it's all about.

They've left provision for themselves in this act. I know that my friend from Cochran-South wants to have a few words, so I'm going to stop speaking and we'll go another round to finish this bill.

It shouldn't surprise us to see them laughing and joking and making fun of those who feel passionately about the process. It's not surprising to see them smirk and joke about the fact that they're destroying yet another tradition in this place around the desire of all members to come to some consensus around change. This just has nothing to do with what we're all used to doing in this place, and of course it's not the first time we've seen that behaviour from this government. It is just another example along the way of how to bully things through, how to ignore and distort the realities of the situation and to present them in a way that suits them.

One of the amusing things about all this is watching the manoeuvring that's happening on the other side. All parties have been government in the last little while, and everyone who has been government knows the hint of panic and the smartly desire to win favour that always seems to show its face when there's a hint that there might be a cabinet shuffle, right? All of a sudden we see people who have been totally silent in this place jumping up and carrying the flag. You go, "Oh, I wonder if it's him," especially when he announces that he's running in a riding where there is a long-standing incumbent. That's one of the things that happened tonight with the member from Muskoka. Apparently he's running in the riding that is now going to be combined under the Fewer Politicians Act

party. We find little announcements like this thrust in. We see people self-consciously making sure that they look exactly right. Of course, when the Premier came in, we saw everybody grinning and dutifully laughing at his jokes and trying to be sure that they get in the focus of his attention. It's always kind of amusing at this point. I know that the few members who were here when we were in government used to laugh and giggle over the same kind of behaviour, and certainly the Liberals have been here too. It does add a certain piquancy to what's going on around this electoral bill.

It also explains why it's so urgent to get this bill through, even though supposedly it's not supposed to take place until January 1, 1999.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riversdale): So what's the rush?

Mrs Boyd: That's what everybody is asking. Why couldn't we have public hearings on this bill? Why wasn't it possible for the Chair of Management Board to wait a couple of days until a discussion occurred around how to get the members around the table, because there are things in this bill, things that truly do modernize the electoral process that most of us could agree to. Of course, the rush

CITY OF TORONTO
AMENDMENT ACT, 1998
LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

Ms Lankin moved second reading of the following bill:
1997 / Projet de loi 44, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur
la cité de Toronto.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): I am sure
all members of the House will understand that I am both
honoured and excited tonight to have this bill come for-
ward and to know that it is going to be passed into law in
Ontario. I say directly to the member for Nepean, as I look
here in both members' galleries, that it is indeed a proud
moment.

Ms Lankin: Thank you.
Applause.

The history of this bill: When the government
announced its intentions to bring forward megacity legis-
lation, it's not a surprise to you for me to say that there
was considerable opposition within the area of Metro-
politan Toronto, which included the cities of Scarborough
and Etobicoke and Toronto and North York and York and
the borough of East York. There was considerable oppo-
sition, but none so mighty and none so fierce as that of the
residents and the truly proud people of the community of
East York. Many of the leaders of that fight-back move-
ment are here in the galleries tonight. It is with shared
pride — I know they feel a sense of accomplishment in
what is about to happen tonight.

During the megacity fight-back, East York began the
campaign. In fact, I again proudly wear tonight the colours
of yellow and black in celebration of their yellow ribbon
campaign, and the signs, you'll remember, in yellow and
black in which they fought vigorously against the mega-
city. In fact, that unique community, the small borough of
East York, had an incredible turnout compared to most
municipal elections in the megacity referendum — not just
an incredible turnout; they had an 81% No vote in that
referendum. It was the most significant No vote of all the
city communities of the now new megacity of Toronto.
I guess in a way that's history. We lost that one, right?
That's gone. The government announced the legislation
was proceeding. What did the people from East York do?
Did they give up? No. As the song says, they picked them-
selves up, brushed themselves off, started all over again
and said, "If you're going to force this megacity on us,
then we want it to work for the people of East York, and
we want fair, democratic representation in our community
of East York." They demanded of this Legislature fair
representation.
They pointed out to us that the population of East York
is about 108,000, and that with only two councillors, as
the legislation proposed at that point in time, they would
have representation of one councillor per about 54,000
residents of East York. They also pointed out that the
average ratio for all of the 28 proposed wards in the new,
The Acting Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

The Acting Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.
reading of Bill 44, An Act to amend the City of Toronto
seek unanimous consent to call the 35th order, second
Hon David Turnbull (Minister without Portfolio): I
Signed by the government whip.
Amendment Act, be deferred until June 24, 1998."
"Pursuant to standing order 28(g), I would like to re-
quest that the vote on Bill 36, the Election Statute Law
The Acting Speaker: This reads:
The division bells rang from 2300 to 2303.
Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.
In my opinion, the eyes have it.
All those opposed, say "nay."
All those in favour, say "aye."
motion carry?
reading of Bill 36. Is it the pleasure of the House that the
The Acting Speaker: Mr Hodgson has moved third
opposite.
fact is protecting their rich friends? It's the parties
second place with \$910 and our party collects an average
of \$522. I put it to the members of this chamber: Who in
are in first place with an average of \$930, the NDP are in
startling, in the area of corporate donations, the Liberals
with an average of \$763 each. Perhaps even more
friends from the third party lead the list in union donations
Hon Mr Snobelen: Let me say that over again. Our
West. The member for Mississauga North has the floor.
The Acting Speaker: Order, member for Ottawa
interjection.
butions, you'll find the NDP leads the list with —
The Conservatives are \$121. If you look at union contri-
Party at \$169, the leading recipient from these rich people.
Under individual contributions, you will find the Liberal
Election Finances you will find quite a different story.
If you look at the annual report of the Commission on
tonight.
shockingly heard it, I think, from the member for Algonia
We've heard that argument from the third party. We've
friends and he's talked about this bill making money king.
evening. He's talked about this government having rich
here. We've heard from the member for St Catharines this
member opposite has said to find out who in fact is cynical
Resources): I think it's worth examining what the
Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural
North.
The Acting Speaker: The member for Mississauga
huge advantage.
at it from an equal perspective. This will give the Tories a
every party and every individual running in Ontario comes
campaign rules in quite an opposite direction, so that
they're doing in England and looking at changing the
ply this: Maybe we're at the point of looking at what
what this government is all about. All I would say is sim-
I think that's cynical. I think it speaks reams about
we'll change the rules in order to give us an ability."

"We can't win the next election by way of fair rules, so
That's why this government is doing it. They're saying,

big megacity of Toronto was about 39,000 residents per councillor. They were at \$4,000, the high end; 39,000 was the lowest, just for your information, was in the city of York, and that was 35,000, very close to the average. So there's no way it could be considered democratic representation for the people of East York.

They said no and they fought back. They tried, through representation, myself and my colleague from Riverdale — who has been my partner through all of this effort, and I appreciate her help and her support — to bring this issue forward. We moved amendments to the bill. I remember the day in committee, I remember the shame that that amendment didn't carry. It could have. With some different actions, some different representation, it could have passed, but it didn't. The megacity legislation passed without fair representation for the people of East York. We kept hammering the issue here in the Legislature to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and he finally said, "I'm not going to do anything, I'm not going to fix it, but if the new city of Toronto wants to fix it I'll abide by their decision," never believing that the people of East York could organize, through their effective representation, to get the city to agree. They did.

2310

They worked that council. It took a couple of tries, a couple of votes and a couple of fix-it's along the way with a couple of bumps in the program, but they accomplished that and they got the new city of Toronto, largely through the incredible leadership of the former mayor of East York, Mike Prue, now councillor for the ward of East York. Through his leadership at city council they accomplished that. That was the magic moment, because when we came back in the House and asked the minister, "Now that the city has said yes, now that they have agreed that East York needs fair representation, will you support it?" the minister, I will say a man of honour, kept his word and said, "Yes, we will support it and we will work with you for your bill." I appreciate that and I applaud the minister for that. It is appreciated.

So here we are tonight. I just want to say, because I want to leave time for my colleague from East York to speak, that there are a lot of people who have built the community of East York. The leadership is here tonight. In terms of the municipal leadership, we think of the years from 1967 to 1972, when True Davidson was the mayor. It was quite amazing in those days for a metropolitan community to elect a woman as a mayor, and there she was, a strong community leader, a strong figure. She was followed by Willis Blair. I got words of encouragement and congratulations for tonight from Willis. He's at a foundation meeting at the East York General Hospital and couldn't be here, but his words are here and we appreciate that support.

He was followed by an appointed mayor, Leslie Saunders, for a period of time. Then came the amazing years from 1977 to 1982 with Alan Redway. Alan called today and said: "I want to be there; I'm with you, Frances. This is wonderful for our community. Thank you. My wishes are with you and Marilyn and the people of East York

tonight." So his best wishes are here. Following that was a

period of time when Dave Johnson was the mayor, and then of course Michael Prue. Michael is here tonight, and he's joined by people from East York: Gail Nyberg, who is the former chair of the board of education in East York, now the chair of the new Toronto district board of education, and of course many members of Team East York whom I see here tonight, and people from the community. We applaud you in your work.

It is a moment of true pride, because it's not often that a private member's bill will make it through into legislation, particularly one of a controversial nature, as this has been. I know there are members of the Legislature who believe that the new city of Toronto council is too big and unwieldy. I'd agree with them, but you don't fix that problem on the backs of the mighty, fierce, strong, loyal people of East York. Those people have fought for equal representation. Tonight they win it. In future, if we fix the problems of the size of the city council of Toronto, inherent in the process will be fair, democratic representation for the people of East York. I am proud to be part of making this happen tonight. I thank you all very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Marion Boyd): Further

debaté?

Mr. John L. Parker (York East): I will keep my remarks short. It's tempting, on occasions like this, I suppose, when we're reflecting on the history of a community, to touch on some of the political figures who have served from time to time, but I would suggest in the case of East York to do that, tempting though it is — and very fine political leadership we have had over the years — is entirely to miss the point of East York. The essence of East York is its people. East York is very much a grass-roots community, a community that is led from the grass roots by the people. The leadership has the greatest respect for the people they represent, recognizing that in a position of political leadership it's a privilege to represent the people of East York, who have themselves sustained that community over many years.

Before coming here this evening, between the vote earlier this evening and tonight's debate, my wife and I were able to take in the second half of the symphony concert tonight. It was the proms concert. It was a great reminder to me, with all those Union Jacks and crosses of St George on display, of the origins of East York, its English origins.

East York, remember, is a community that is represented by the white rose of York and the symbols of the community of East York, because that is the origin of East York; that is the foundation and those are the traditions of East York. Those traditions and the service that East York has given to this country and to the world in two world wars are reflected in the street names. The street names reflect that: names like Warvet, names like Merritt, names like Valor, names like Dunkirk. These are local names in East York, and a park with a name like Dièppe Park. They reflect the essence of East York.

For those reasons, it strikes me as entirely appropriate that East York should have greater representation on the new city council, and for that reason I support this bill.

2320

In so doing, I wouldn't want to suggest that this is the entire solution to the issue. I point out to the House that under the amendments to the Municipal Act introduced by the same minister, Minister Leach, the new council has the authority, the power, to make changes in its own makeup at the time of the next election. It has the opportunity now to turn its mind to the correct, more appropriate, more updated revision of ward boundaries right across the board. Just because East York was the most serious example of imbalance in representation doesn't mean it was the only example.

Remember, the ward boundaries that were used were the old ward boundaries of old Metro Toronto which were established I think under the Peterson government. It would be appropriate and it is timely for the city council to take advantage of this juncture and the powers that they have to amend all of the ward boundaries and bring them all up to date.

In doing that, they may want to consider the benefits and the merits and the wisdom of reducing the total number of councillors to a number that's more manageable than the 57 councillors that will lamentably result as a result of this amendment. That is a matter for the city council to consider, and I would urge them to turn their minds to that. From all accounts I've heard, they're finding that they don't need the benefit of another councillor to make council work. They do for the purposes of making representation fair for the voters and the residents of East York, but in terms of making council work, all of the evidence so far suggests that council would work just as well, if not better, with a smaller number of councillors. So that is a challenge that remains for the city council to address, and I urge them to get on with that.

In the meantime, we have this bill before us that will bring fair representation to East York. Like the member for Beaches-Woodbine, I applaud the minister for living up to his commitment and allowing this measure to pass. With those remarks, I conclude my comments this evening and indicate my support for this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? The member for York — Oakwood.

Mr. Mike Colle (Oakwood): Thank you. Most of Oakwood is in the city of York; part of it is in the city of Toronto.

As the member for York East said, in the city of York we have four members on the megacity council. It has about 130,000 citizens and we have four reps, and East York, which is about 103,000, has two. I guess this takes us back to the hearings we had on the megacity. I remember that a number of people brought this forward. A number of deputants, who they never listened to, said: "This is not going to work. You can't have two reps." Part of the legislation said you were going to create a community council, and how can you create a council

Although that is the origin of East York, East York has become home to many communities from right around the world, none more proud than the strong Greek community that currently finds its home in East York and is a very important component and a very strong contributor to the richness of today's East York. East York today is home to many communities from all parts of the globe, and that is a richness that is continuing to build with each passing day. Regardless of the municipal structure, regardless of the political leadership, regardless of whether there is a borough, whether there is a megacity, whether there's a community council or whatever, it's the people who are the essence of it.

I support this bill tonight not because I have any concerns whatsoever about the future of East York under an amalgamated Toronto. The future of East York and the future of Toronto will only be better, only be stronger, under amalgamation with the rest of the communities surrounding us. None of that will change the essence of the people of East York and what it is that makes East York so important.

That is not why I support this bill. It's not sour grapes over the megacity. I support the megacity. I think that was the right thing to do. It's about time that a government had the courage to bring about amalgamation in Metro Toronto and put Toronto on a footing where it belongs and that it deserves to have and to set the stage for the future as we work together with the communities around Toronto and take our place worldwide and help to bring this province and this country into the next century and into the next millennium on a better footing than we've ever had before. I support amalgamation. That's not the issue here. The issue here is representation on the city council, and as a strict matter of arithmetic, a strict matter of numbers, it is quite clear that the representation of East York on the Toronto city council right now is out of balance with the representation of the other wards. That is something we have an opportunity here to correct.

East York has about 101,000-odd residents. It has two municipal councillors, so about some 50,000-odd residents per councillor. That is a much larger number of residents per councillor than other wards in the new city. Adding a third councillor will bring the ratio down to about one councillor for every 34,000 or 35,000, and that's in line with what we see elsewhere in the city. It's important to note that in doing that, that does not bring East York to the other end of the spectrum. It puts East York in line with other communities in the city. It is fair to the residents of East York without being unfair to anyone else.

In terms of community representation on the new city council, the community of East York has some 100,000-odd residents. The community of York, by comparison, has about 134,000 or 135,000 residents, and they have four councillors for those 134,000 or 135,000 residents. So with about a third more people, they have two times the representation. Giving East York a third councillor will bring some balance into that degree of representation as well.

with two people? That's what they tried to do, and obviously it's not working. It's not working from a community council perspective and from a representation perspective. That's why it made sense a year ago to have the third councillor. It makes eminent sense today to have the third councillor.

I know this government is caught up in talking about fewer politicians, fewer representatives. I would think that it's time people started reflecting how important it is to get on the side of representation as opposed to the so-called fixation that this government has about downsizing representation, centralizing. This is sort of the flavour of the year or the flavour of the month.

I think East York does stand for something. I served with a number of mayors from East York. I served with the Minister of Education. I know Willis Blair and Alan Redway, fine people. They represented the fine people of East York who, during the megacity battle, as I think Frances Lankin said, really led the way in terms of giving people hope who had lost hope in that battle against this big government.

The two major dailies and all the media were against the people who didn't want to have the megacity, but East York was like the little David versus Goliath, who said: "We aren't going to cave in to big government or big media. We believe in community." They did that every day. They used money out of their own pockets to buy signs and ribbons and buttons. They didn't use government propaganda machines. With their leadership, they stood this government and the big media on their ears.

East York had a spirit that you couldn't wash away with spin speeches in this House, you couldn't wash away that with that phoney piece of propaganda that went door to door early on, the contemptuous piece of propaganda that the Speaker ruled in contempt of the House. East Yorkers didn't believe that. They believed themselves, because East York always prided itself on participation.

East York was the only council of the six councils any council meeting and make a deputation to the full council. You couldn't do that at Metro or the other five councils. East York always had an open door; I know Mayor Prue had that policy, and the other mayors did. They always had an open door so people could walk down the street and go in and see the mayor or one of the councillors and tell him what for.

That is why the people of East York were so against the megacity, because the megacity took that away from them. That's what they feared and that's why they opposed it, not because of any political ideology, not because of any kind of sophisticated political formula. They said, "Listen, we've had good service, and we don't have a lot of money." East York never had a lot of money. They always had a very small industrial base, but they always squeezed every cent to give their citizens good basic service in recreation and in terms of services for seniors, which they've always had a significant number of for their population. They prided themselves on having an open door and giving real, sincere service.

This is quite a contrast when you're in a big city like Metropolitan Toronto. The one-size-fits-all approach that this government has did not fit the people of East York. They said: "We don't want your one size fits all. We want a government that's close to us, that we can hold accountable, so that if they get us angry, we can go and speak to them." And they did, frequently. East York council meetings were frequently packed.

You go to megacity council meetings, and unless there's a really hot issue, you're lucky to find 10 people there. This is for a city of 2.3 million. Yet East York council committees were always filled with citizens who not only went — excuse the language — to bitch at government, but also went there to say how to make it better.

They also contributed to the local Lions Club and to the home and school associations. These people didn't only complain; they also rolled up their sleeves and pitched in East York, and that's why things were so good in East York. Sure, they didn't have a lot of money, they didn't have all these fancy new high-tech solutions, but they had good, honest, accountable government they could ask questions of.

I think at least this bill does give East York that representation which they like so much. As far as I am concerned, the more representation East York has, the better. I think it's important to keep that East York spirit alive so we can all learn about East York and how to make good government across the city and across Ontario. Long live East York.

2330

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): First of all, I want to thank the member for London Centre for taking my place in the chair tonight so I could be in my seat to speak to this bill.

Second, I want to thank and congratulate the member for Beaches-Woodbine for coming up with this idea of a private member's bill to get a third councillor. I have to admit that when the member first introduced it I didn't have a lot of hope for the bill's actually getting through.

I do know that after it was introduced, the people who are sitting here tonight, the mayor, or the former mayor — I still refer to him as the mayor; I forget — Mayor Prue over there and others immediately, although they were fighting for that third councillor for all along and that is where the member for Beaches-Woodbine got the idea, because they were unable to convince the government to allow that. Some time after the member for Beaches-Woodbine introduced this bill, it became clear that there was in fact a really good chance that we could work together in an unusual way in this House, in a non-partisan way, to get the bill passed.

Again, I want to congratulate and thank the people from East York who are sitting here tonight who worked so very hard. I think this was an opportunity and an example of a group of people working in a non-partisan way.

I look in the galleries tonight and I see New Democrats and I see some Tories, although some of them don't admit that they're Tories, and some Liberals possibly. I know that we have all-party support for the bill tonight. I think

we should be very proud because this is a rare time in this House where we all get together and do something together in a non-partisan way that is for the good of the people and, in this case, for democracy in Toronto.

I want to thank the minister for sticking to his word. He told me, and he was very clear about it, he doesn't agree with it. He made that very clear. He made the commitment and after the city council decided to go ahead, and they would run the by-election, he did keep to his word and he did say that he would support it.

I believe the member for Oakwood spoke earlier about the spirit of East York, that they had a strong spirit. I've got to tell you that's still there. I've been phoning people from East York recently and in fact inviting them to my nomination meeting which is coming up soon and getting their addresses.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): Where would they go? Give us the address.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): What's the date? Where is it and when?

Ms Chutley: It's Thursday. But what's interesting is that, without exception, everybody who gave me their address on the telephone said the street name and then said, "East York," quite emphatically — not Toronto, but East York — every single one of them independently of each other.

It is a very strong community. That is something I learned during the whole megacity debate, where I had the honour and the opportunity of working with these fine people who gave everything they had — everything. They worked day and night, first of all, to convince the province to not go ahead with the megacity, and then to try to get the by-election for the third councillor. I think what we're seeing here tonight is the testament to their hard work and their dedication and their commitment to their community of East York.

I am really proud and really honoured to stand here tonight, having played a part along with my friend and colleague from Beaches-Woodbine and along with my new friends from East York. We all worked very hard together to get here tonight, and I want to congratulate them in particular for their dedication and their hard work. I would join with the member for Oakwood and be a little corny here and say, "Long live East York." Thank you all very much for supporting this bill.

Hon David Turnbull (Minister without Portfolio): First of all, I'll start out by saying I am going to support this bill tonight and I am very pleased to see this before us. I will mention a little bit about how I know East York. My wife actually ran a little one-hour photo store for many, many years on Bayview Avenue and we got a very keen attachment to the people of East York, particularly the people of Leaside. I should say, during that time, Leaside is one of those really rather unique communities in Toronto which has its own very distinctive characteristics. The people are careful and good and caring. That isn't to suggest they don't have these characteristics in other parts of town, but there's a very special spirit about Leaside, as anybody knows who crosses the street to the

west side of Bayview Avenue. You'll be very clearly told that is not Leaside, and indeed it isn't. There's a different characteristic to the other side of Bayview Avenue. The people of Leaside are people we have a great deal of admiration for and people my wife and I got to know well, particularly my wife.

In fact, the interesting thing about this bill tonight is it's a bill to add an extra councillor to this area. That's appropriate because we know the numbers weren't quite right. In giving this extra councillor to East York, it changes the balance so that there are some other areas of the city which have a lower ratio of representation than East York will have with this.

Ideally, we should always in a democracy seek to have approximately the same number of voters in each circumscription of the vote. I would hope that the council, near-ing the end of its first term, will get around to the whole idea of rebalancing the number of people in an area and hopefully reducing the number of total politicians. That would be totally consistent with what we put out a year before the election.

We said that we intended to reduce the number of politicians in the provincial Legislature because we believe that's good for the taxpayers. We believe that the politicians in the province should be able to serve the same number of constituents as federal ridings and in fact that's what we're moving to. We're reducing it down from 130 ridings to 103 ridings and we will reduce the cost to the taxpayer of running elections quite considerably.

The immediate goal of this bill is to make sure there's a better balance for East York, and that's good. But there is a move to this rebalancing, East York is well represented in the discussions about rebalancing the size of each ward.

I want to congratulate my colleague the member for Beaches-Woodbine, who was talking. I congratulate you on bringing this forward. I also want to point out to the Legislature that my colleague John Parker, the member for York East, had in fact produced in his office a bill very similar to this and —

Hon Mr Turnbull: I feel it's very unsporting for the member for Beaches-Woodbine to make that noise.

Mr Bisson: It wasn't her, it was me.

Hon Mr Turnbull: Quite frankly, I remember very distinctly when I had a private member's bill, in third party position. I sent the bill over to the government of the day, the NDP, and guess what? One of their members introduced it ahead of me, a certain Mr George Man-moiti. You may remember him. Later on, he admitted that the minister had asked him to bring the bill in so that in fact the government of the day would get the credit. But that is not the way we have worked in this. We have worked cooperatively with the member for Beaches-Woodbine.

Interjection:

Hon Mr Turnbull: It's entirely true. East York will get the representation it deserves and it will work towards an organization for the next municipal election, which

been introduced because East York never should have been taken off the map of this metropolitan city — doesn't mean for a moment that we in any way agree with what this government has done with respect to the Fewer Politicians Act and with respect to the megacity act.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I'd like to propose unanimous consent for the member for York East, Mr Parker, to produce the bill that he has in his office here tonight.

The Acting Speaker: That is not —

Mr Bradley: Agreed?

Intjections.

The Acting Speaker: I hear a no. Is there further debate?

Intjection.

The Acting Speaker: Order, member for Etobicoke-Humber.

Seeing no further debate, Ms Lankin has moved second reading of Bill 44. Is the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Mr Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move third reading of Bill 44, An Act to amend

the City of Toronto Act, 1997.

The Acting Speaker: Is there agreement? Agreed.

Ms Lankin moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 44, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 44, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la cité de Toronto.

hearings.

Ms Lankin: The member for Nepean is asking whether

or not we would like to have committee hearings. I have told him already tonight I would be delighted but I suspect, and I've been told by the government House leader that that is out of the question. I appreciate that we are moving to third reading and that the bill will be enacted.

I don't intend to take long at this point. I've made my comments tonight. I thank the members who participated in the debate, even those who provided a little bit of revisionist history. I thank them all. I do have to say that this could have been done in a much easier way. To the member for York East I must say, "Too little too late." To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the government

House leader and those who have made this possible, my colleagues and the people of East York, we're delighted to see this become law tonight.

With that I will take my seat, and look forward to the vote.

The Acting Speaker: Ms Lankin has moved third reading of Bill 44. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I realize it may be a little difficult for you serving in the chair to answer this question, but as a House leader I would like to get some clarification. We have government bills, private members' bills, private

hopefully will reduce the number of politicians, will work towards reducing the cost of government, which was totally consistent with what we said in the Common Sense Revolution, which we put out a year before the last election.

For anybody watching this on television, if you have your copy of the Common Sense Revolution, I'll make references to the pages. We talked about less government spending on page 7. We talked about fewer politicians on page 8. We talked about restructuring bureaucracy on page 8. We talked about doing better for less, a concept that neither of the parties opposite are particularly familiar with, on page 15. We talked about spending smarter on page 16.

Intjections.

Hon Mr Turnbull: I see we've hit a nerve with the opposition.

2340

Hon Mr Turnbull: We talked about less government

on page 17, and less government is what we should be

striving for —

Intjection.

The Acting Speaker: Order, member for Oakwood.

Hon Mr Turnbull: — because we serve the taxpayers

better.

I seem to have hit a little bit of a nerve but there is nothing in what I am saying which is in any way dimin-

utive of the people from East York. We're in support of the people from East York, as indeed has been the ministry.

We are saying that it is appropriate that the council of Toronto move towards more economy so that it serves the

taxpayers better.

The communities in Toronto, particularly the communities in East York, I believe will survive very well be-

cause people still talk about Leaside, which disappeared as a municipality in 1967 and today is one of the most

vibrant, if not the most vibrant, communities in the whole of Toronto.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): It may surprise some of you to know that I actually lived in

East York, on Glenburn Avenue, for some three years, from 1969 to 1971. It was within about one block of Vic-

toria Avenue. But that's not the point.

The point I'm simply trying to make is that the mere fact that we agree with this bill — and I happen to agree with this bill and have from the initial outset, I didn't

agree with megacity and our party didn't agree with megacity and our party certainly didn't agree with the Fewer Politicians Act. I think it's rather an irony that the

government touts the Fewer Politicians Act as a mechanism whereby we're saving the taxpayers' money. Yet on the same night that a government member talks about that

bill, we have also passed a bill which in effect allows the government party in this case to spend an awful lot more

money in running elections, and we all know they have the ability to do that.

Certainly the fact that we're supporting this bill in its entirety and completely — perhaps it never should have

bills, and now we have another category called bill in your office?

The Acting Speaker: That is not a point of order, member for Algoma.

CHILD CARE SUPPLEMENT
INFORMATION COLLECTION ACT, 1998
LOI DE 1998 SUR LA COLLECTE
DES RENSEIGNEMENTS NÉCESSAIRES
À L'OCTROI
DU SUPPLÉMENT DE REVENU
POUR LES FRAIS DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Mr Baird, on behalf of Mr Eves, moved second reading of the following bill:

Information for the Payment of the Ontario Child Care Bill 28, An Act to permit the Collection of Personal Supplement for Working Families / Projet de loi 28, Loi permettant la collecte de renseignements personnels en vue du versement du supplément de revenu de l'Ontario pour les familles travaillieuses ayant des frais de garde d'enfants.

posed a new Ontario child care supplement for working families that would be delivered monthly to 210,000 children under the age of seven years. The budget proposed that payment of a supplement would start late in 1998. To ensure that payments begin in 1998, personal information to determine entitlement for the supplement must be collected by early this fall. Bill 28, if enacted, would authorize the collection of this very important information.

The bill provides that information collected under this act is to be destroyed if legislation establishing the supplement has not been enacted by March 31, 1999, and repeals the authority to collect information on April 1, 1999. The Information and Privacy Commissioner was consulted in the drafting of this bill, and this bill reflects the advice we heard from the commissioner.

I could give some background to this bill. In the 1997 budget Ontario introduced a refundable tax credit for lower-income families who incurred child care expenses. This \$40-million tax credit provided up to \$400 for each child under the age of seven years. It is estimated that 90,000 families claim this tax credit in respect of 125,000 children. The 1998 budget proposed that the existing \$40-million Ontario child tax benefit be combined with \$100 million available under the national child benefit initiative to create a new \$140-million Ontario child care supplement for working families.

As I mentioned, this supplement would be delivered monthly to 210,000 families with 350,000 children under the age of seven. The maximum annual supplement would be \$1,020 for each child under the age of seven. Lower- and middle-income working families and families incurring child care expenses in order to attend school or obtaining would be eligible for the supplement. The supplement would be reduced by 8% of family net income in

excess of \$20,000 and by provincial-municipal child care subsidies. Families would be required to apply for the supplement.

2350

The budget proposed that the first supplement would be paid in late 1998 and would consist of benefits accumulated from July 1998, and thereafter a supplement would be paid on a monthly basis. In order for the first payment to be made in 1998, the budget indicated that families would be required to apply for the supplement by September 30, 1998. Application forms would be mailed out to potential families by late August, and legislation to implement the supplement would not be introduced until the fall of 1998. In order to collect the information, the government has presented Bill 28 towards that.

This bill is designed to help put more money in the hands of hardworking families in the province who are raising children. The government wants to support those lower- and modest-income families in raising children. The measures contained in the budget are designed to do that. These measures are of course part of an overall plan, an overall strategy to try to put more money in the hands of hardworking families, because we know that the effect of high taxes have had a tremendously difficult impact on far too many middle-class families across Ontario. So the whole motive of this government is to try to put more money in their hands to allow them to raise their families and allow them to make choices on how to spend what is often their own money.

That's why the personal income tax reductions are a big part of that plan, which the child care initiatives that I just outlined complement. The tax cuts allowing hard-working taxpayers to keep more of their own money are extremely important. The province of Ontario, when this government was elected, was not in good economic shape. For many years Ontario had been the economic engine of Canada. Ontario had been a magnet for jobs, investment and opportunity, but over a period of 10 years, from 1985 to 1995, a very different Ontario emerged. Ontario became known as a mismanaged debtor. We had become overgoverned, we had become overregulated and we had become overtaxed. The lack of hope and the lack of prosperity in Ontario was of real concern to us.

We made a very difficult decision, but it was a decision that was virtually unanimous. We could decide to fight the deficit or we could decide to fight unemployment. This government chose to fight unemployment. We chose to try to create an environment for job creation. We said that job creation was more important than fighting the debt. I don't apologize for that, because saying to the unemployed people in Ontario in 1995, "Step aside, we'll balance the budget first and then we'll try to deal with your concerns," it would have been wrong, it would have been immoral and it would have been the wrong route. It's the route the people of Ontario rejected. They said yes to job creation, yes to initiatives designed to encourage economic expansion, yes to allowing hardworking taxpayers to keep more of their hard-earned tax dollars. They said yes to allowing consumer confidence to rise. The plan is indeed working.

Mr Cullen: Why do you have the same bond rating as

the Rae government —

The Acting Speaker: Member for Ottawa West, I don't want to have to warn you again. Please come to order.

Mr Baird: I'm not going to bring up the issue that members from Ottawa sometimes cause trouble at this hour of the night in this place.

I am pleased to talk again about this important piece of legislation that's before us. It's very important to put it in context because this is a measure contained in the budget.

The member for Oakwood, Mike Colle, said, "I don't want to be part of the mushy middle any more."

Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South): He changed his mind in the last three years.

Mr Baird: He did indeed.

The member for Windsor-Sandwich: Do you know what she said? "How can we go in guns blazing when we would have been doing the same thing?" But the member for Windsor-Sandwich isn't here to defend herself on that.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Government members, come to order.

Mr Baird: It's a very, very important —

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Your nose is getting brown.

Mr Baird: I could do more quotes. How about the member for Windsor-Walkerville? "We've been far too fuzzy for far too long." He goes on: "We're going to have to some day decide what we stand for and then stand for it. We have some serious navel-gazing to do."

Interjection: Who said that?

Mr Baird: The member for Windsor-Walkerville. A very important thing.

Mr Bradley: Somebody make sure Mike gets a copy of this. Brown, brown, brown.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Mr Baird: But the province of Ontario is in stronger economic shape than it was just a few short years ago, and that is indeed good news. Since this government took office —

Mr Bradley: Brownest nose.

The Acting Speaker: Member for St Catharines.

Mr Baird: — there are 363,000 total net new jobs in Ontario. That represents about 45% of all the jobs created in Canada over the same period, and that's incredible.

Mr Hudak: Any jobs in Nepean?

Mr Baird: The member for Niagara South says, "Any jobs in Nepean?" Indeed, 5,000 jobs coming to the city of Nepean — the Nortel expansion. Again to the member for Niagara Falls: "Tech Boom Triggers New Development: Skyrocketing Building Permits Show Sector's Impact."

"The local economy got more good news yesterday as Nepean announced an incredible 365% jump in the total value of building permits issued."

The Acting Speaker: It being 12 of the clock, this House is now adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 2:00.

One of the members who is generally a fairly wise

member was talking earlier in a rather strange way that the economy might not be doing terribly well, but I look at an article from the Ottawa Citizen from earlier this month:

"Indicators Point to Expanding Economy: More Jobs, Rising Retail Sales in Ottawa Generate Optimism and Consumer Confidence."

That's exactly what the economic policies relating to last year's child care supplement or to the tax cut were designed to do. "Rising employment and the solid performance in key business indicators continue to show the Ottawa-area economy is in a strong expansion mode, a review of the latest economic indicators shows."

I can recall the days when I was campaigning for a seat in this place, in 1994 and 1995, and unemployment in Ottawa-Carleton topped 10.8%. If there was one single thing that was worse than that, it was the lack of hope and opportunity for the future, because while far too many people were unemployed, far more were worried about their family and about their future.

Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber): They were worried about their kids.

Mr Baird: The member for Etobicoke-Humber says they were worried about their kids, whether they'd be able to get a job when they graduated from school. They were worried about their own jobs, whether they'd be able to keep them. They worried about whether they'd have the economic security to retire with dignity and in comfort, and that was at 10.8% unemployment — a national tragedy. We went to work, fulfilling the economic program laid out in the last provincial election —

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): How much debt did you take on?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs Marion Boyd): The member for Ottawa West.

Mr Baird: The member for Ottawa West asks how much debt we took on. A lot less than the red book promised in the last provincial election. The two economic —

Mr Cullen: Compared to you —

The Acting Speaker: Member for Ottawa West, order.

Mr Baird: The two economic plans put side by side: The implementation of our plan is actually seeing less debt than the red book forecast. The Liberal Party promised to balance the budget in four years. We promised to balance the budget in five years. I'll bet when the numbers are compared, we will have exceeded the numbers in the red book. I am convinced about that.

But some members want to walk away. Some members supported tax cuts. I was reading an interesting press release dated Thursday, February 16, 1995: "McLeod Reinforces Commitment to Cut Taxes."

"Ontario Liberal Leader Lyn McLeod said tonight a Liberal government of Ontario would cut taxes. 'It's time the government started following a policy of zero tax increases. A Liberal government will reduce overall taxes.'"

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CONTENTS

Tuesday 23 June 1998

Loi de 1998 modifiant la Loi sur la cité de Toronto, projet de loi 44, <i>M^{me} Lankin</i>	1820
Loi de 1998 sur la collecte des renseignements nécessaires à l'octroi du supplément de revenu pour les frais de garde d'enfants, projet de loi 28, <i>M. Eves</i>	1823
TROISIÈME LECTURE	
Loi de 1998 sur le développement économique et sur la démocratie en milieu de travail, projet de loi 31, <i>M. Flaherty</i>	1793
M. Lalonde.....	1793
Adoptée.....	1800
Loi de 1998 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les élections, projet de loi 36, <i>M. Hodgson</i>	1815
Voie différé.....	1815
Loi de 1998 modifiant la Loi sur la cité de Toronto, projet de loi 44, <i>M^{me} Lankin</i>	1821
DEUXIÈME LECTURE	
Loi de 1998 sur le développement économique et sur la démocratie en milieu de travail, projet de loi 31, <i>M. Flaherty</i>	1783
Adoptée.....	1783
Loi de 1998 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les élections, projet de loi 36, <i>M. Hodgson</i>	1800
Adoptée.....	1800
SECOND READINGS	
Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 1998, Bill 36, <i>Mr Hodgson</i>	1800
Agreed to.....	1783
Workplace Democracy Act, 1998, Bill 31, <i>Mr Flaherty</i>	1783
Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 1998, Bill 36, <i>Mr Hodgson</i>	1800
Agreed to.....	1800
City of Toronto Amendment Act, 1998, Bill 44, <i>Ms Lankin</i>	1820
City of Toronto Amendment Act, 1998, Bill 44, <i>Ms Lankin</i>	1820
Agreed to.....	1820
Child Care Supplement Information Collection Act, 1998, Bill 28, <i>Mr Eves</i>	1821
Debate deemed adjourned.....	1823
THIRD READINGS	
Economic Development and Workplace Democracy Act, 1998, Bill 31, <i>Mr Flaherty</i>	1783
Mr Flaherty.....	1783
Mr Maves.....	1785
Mr Beaubien.....	1787
Mr Patten.....	1789
Mr Cordiano.....	1790
Mr Cullen.....	1791
Mr Lessard.....	1794
Mr Wildman.....	1796
Mr Bisson.....	1798
Agreed to.....	1800



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Wednesday 24 June 1998

Mercredi 24 juin 1998



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

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ASSEMBLÉE LEGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 24 juin 1998

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 24 June 1998

*The House met at 1:32.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ITALIAN CANADIAN COMMUNITY

Ms Annamarie Castriulli (Downsview): Today marks

a double celebration for Canada. We commemorate Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day, but we also remember the landfall on this day 501 years ago of an enterprising explorer off the coast of what we now know as Canada.

Giovanni Caboto, citizen of Venice in the service of England's King Henry II, is said to have landed off the coast of Newfoundland where the town of Bonavista now stands. In fact, the town is said to owe its name to a phrase uttered by Caboto. On seeing land he exclaimed, "O bona vista," Italian for, "Oh, what a beautiful sight." He then planted the flags of Venice and England.

Today we reflect on the fact that Canada was discovered neither by the French nor by the English. It was an Italian who laid the foundation for French and English in this country. It also gives us an opportunity to reflect on the deep roots and long history of Italians in Canada, a people who through this century have greatly enriched this country.

Canadians of Italian origin have been builders of roads, buildings, railways and businesses. They have contributed to the artistic and professional life of Canada. And they have built bridges of tolerance and respect among all peoples in this country.

That is why a former Liberal leader, David Peterson, some 10 years ago declared today Giovanni Caboto Day, and it is why today we pay tribute not just to an Italian explorer, but to the significant contributions and legacy throughout the centuries of a vibrant Canadian community of Italian origin.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): With less than a week to go in the month of June, the Minister of Health has yet to make good on her promise to give more money to the northern community care centres. In a radio interview on June 10, Minister Witter said, "We are going to be indicating this month what initial amount of money is going to be available...and obviously the CCACs in the north, as elsewhere, will be receiving additional money." This contrasts greatly with what the Sudbury-Manitowlin CCAC has already been told by ministry staff

in Sudbury. On three separate occasions the executive director and the chair of the board have told they will not receive additional money this year or next year. In fact, they won't see any more money added to the base budget until the year 2000. No wonder the Minister of Health still has not released the details of funding for northern CCACs.

The fact is, since elected, the Harris government has cut \$8.6 million from Sudbury hospitals, with more cuts coming this year. People are being discharged faster than ever before and they need community health services to get well again. In Sudbury-Manitowlin, nursing visits increased 25% and homemaking services 14%. Between October 1997 and April 1998 the entire budget of \$20.1 million was spent. That is why the Sudbury-Manitowlin CCAC has requested an additional \$2.1 million to meet its needs.

It's time for the minister to come clean on this issue. She made a promise. Release the budget numbers so we know if our CCAC will be getting additional —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you.

SEWAGE AND WATER TREATMENT

Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): I want to speak today about water and the importance of clean water to Ontarians and to the people of Muskoka-Georgian Bay, who are blessed with the richest fresh water resources in the province.

While some would suggest that the environment is suffering, in fact our government has been able, through strong fiscal management, to invest significantly in the restoration of our water resources.

A week and a half ago, I participated in a ceremony in Midland marking the completion of an \$8.4-million upgrade of the town's waste water treatment facility. The provincial government contributed \$3.3 million to this project, which includes a state-of-the-art primary digester, a large egg-shaped device that uses heat treatment to eliminate organics and bacteria in waste water.

Other recent funding announcements include a provincial commitment to provide assistance for the construction of a communal sewage collection and treatment system for the community of Port Severn. Approximately \$3.8 million has been advanced for this project.

Earlier this month, the provincial water protection fund announced that Tay township will benefit from two grants totalling more than \$5 million to construct a new sewage treatment plant to serve the residents of these communities.

The list of provincially assisted environmental improvement projects since 1995 which have been funded to clean up the Severn sound area alone totals over \$23 million.

Port Carling will benefit from a grant of up to \$3.5 million to construct a new water treatment plant.

These announcements are a good indication of the commitment this government has to protect the environment and ensure a safe drinking water supply —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you.

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkeale): As part of the Canadian unity parade on July 1, representatives of national congresses of ethnocultural Canadians have taken a giant historic step to foster national unity.

This evening they will sign a letter and a petition to the people of Quebec and their leaders, part of which reads “to express our best wishes to the people of Quebec for a joyous Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day. We further call upon the people of Quebec and their political leaders to continue the dialogue with the other Canadian provinces and the government of Canada on issues of national unity in order to continue to celebrate Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day in one country.”

A second step in terms of the rapprochement with Quebec is the national unity parade on July 1. I might remind members, all of you are invited to come with us. There will be signs which will say, “We need you, Quebec, because you are part of our indivisible family.”

I simply say to this assembly, I hope that many of you will participate so that together we can say with one voice to this country, “Long live Canada and long live Quebec.” I remind all the members that together we can have one strong voice and together we can make a difference.

1340

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): I rise to address the loss of timely and effective government service for my constituents and for the people of Ontario.

Ombudsman Roberta Jamieson reports that the drastic financial cutbacks facing ministries and related agencies have resulted in increased public frustration with many government services. According to the Ombudsman's report, there have been unacceptable delays in services provided by several key agencies, including the Human Rights Commission, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal and the adoption disclosure registry.

One of my constituents, Gillian McCrostie, has been searching for her birth mother through the ADR, the adoption disclosure register, and has waited eight years for some information. Her birth mother is 80 years old now and delays like this are potentially cruel. The financial inability to secure consistent staff has opened many agencies up to what the Ombudsman has called the “possibility of public or private influence,” something the Tory agenda exposes us all to.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): Today in our local newspaper, reporting on the deliberations that occurred at the Windsor-Essex district school board, we in our community learned that at least four high schools are on the block, threatened to be closed by September 1999. Two of those schools happen to be in my riding: W.D. Lowe and Walkerville collegiate institute. The members of the government oppose understanding what the people at the Windsor and Essex public school board —

Interventions.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Do you know what? I think we need a little order, actually. It's a little disruptive in here. I understand that you're getting together for a couple of meetings, but it's important that we have those meetings outside rather than in here when a member has the floor. Okay? Don't even go there.

Mr Duncan: What the Windsor and Essex public school board said is that these schools will have to be closed as a direct result of the government's funding

the Norfolk Co-operative in celebrating the founding of their organization.

It has been 80 years since J. “Alex” Wallace met with two of his farming neighbours following a Sunday church service and took the first step towards establishing a

farmers' cooperative on January 18, 1918. Our farm also joined the co-op in that year.

The first directors included Horace Kellam, Windham; W.A. Bower, North Walsingham; Herschel Glover and Harry Hall, Townsend; and Perry Sowden from Woodhouse. The dream of these early founders has come to embody the spirit of hardworking people in Norfolk.

From its founding as a feed mill providing lower-priced feed to farmer members, emphasis at the co-op shifted to grain marketing, and later machinery, fertilizer and lumber, a division where I worked a number of years ago.

The cooperative, centred in Simcoe, expanded to Jarvis in 1943, Courtland in 1946 and Watford in 1949. For 80 years, dedicated and professional members and employees have been rising to the challenges of good and not-so-good times to ensure that the ideals of the Norfolk co-op are maintained.

I'm proud of my friends and neighbours who support the Norfolk Co-operative and I wish to congratulate them on the 80th anniversary of this organization.

NORFOLK CO-OPERATIVE

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I wish to congratulate my friends and neighbours in Norfolk who are members of the Norfolk Co-operative in celebrating the founding of

People are very slowly but surely feeling the disastrous effects of Tory cutbacks.

These far-reaching cutbacks to key services threaten the credibility of the whole public service. As the Ombudsman's report shows, Ontarians are frustrated. The loss of equitable and timely public service is a consequence of heavy-handed Tory cuts.

A Crow Ontario grant from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the participation of eight private sector ice cream manufacturers have also been instrumental in the planning and promotion of the event.

Thousands of Ontarians are expected to visit Southside Park, Museum Square and the theatre in the Market Centre in Woodstock, where events will include free ice cream sampling, ice cream contests and demonstrations. Whether your favourite is an ice cream cone, sundae, float, shake or banana split, Canada's Ice Cream Festival will offer treats for all tastes. Creative ice cream connoisseurs will be able to build their own exotic desserts in the Signature Sundae or the Giant Banana Boat contests. Visitors to the festival will enjoy a crafters' market, Village Militia Muster, military demonstrations, midway rides, live entertainment and more. Admission is free and the festival will operate during the hours of 11 am to 6 pm. I would like to extend an invitation to all Ontarians to join me in Woodstock, the Dairy Capital of Canada, on July 4 and 5, for Canada's first Ice Cream Festival.

MEMBER'S PRIVILEGE

Hon David Turnbull (Minister without Portfolio): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: At a late hour yesterday evening, the Chair failed to recognize me. Unfortunately, I showed my annoyance and I regret that.

MEMBER'S CONDUCT

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I thank the chief government whip for that statement. It kind of leads into a statement I was prepared to make today. I beg the indulgence of the House to address a state of affairs which has become very concerning to all the presiding officers, and in fact to many other members. There can be no doubt that the fundamental prerequisite for this assembly to function is that all members conduct themselves in a way that demonstrates a basic acceptance of the dignity of this chamber. We all are honoured to have been chosen by our electors to represent them in this, their House. To conduct ourselves, as the public's temporary delegates, in a way that brings disrepute to the proceedings of the assembly is disrespectful to them, and to the traditions of Parliament.

Aside from matters of general order and decorum, perhaps the most important manifestation of this respect is the quality of our response to the Chair. Your Speaker, and any Speaker, chosen by you, is charged with the responsibility of upholding the many noble traditions of our parliamentary democracy. When the Chair is treated with disrespect, then disrespect falls upon each of us, and the rightful expectations of the public can only be undermined. Challenges to the Chair are challenges upon the rules and traditions that we must collectively agree to be governed by. I can understand — and I can understand — that in some situations emotions may run rather high. Members may be inclined to disagree with rulings, and I accept the

formula. The school board does not have the money to supply heat, electricity and other essential items that this government didn't consider important to classroom education. What we're left with is the downtown core of our city being robbed of two high schools; two schools that are well-populated, two schools that offer unique programs, two schools that serve special needs populations, two schools that have a deep and ingrained history in our province. Indeed, just last year the Premier sent a congratulatory note to one of those schools on its 75th anniversary. It's truly a shame that this has to happen.

I say to the Minister of Education and I say to the government, the people of my community know who is responsible and who will be responsible for those closings. It's you and your cuts to education.

AIR QUALITY

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): Today is another one of those bad-air days. There are high levels of smog, high humidity and dangerously high levels of low-level ozone.

In Windsor-Riverside the weather is warm and the sun is shining, but unfortunately the air stinks, and it's going to get worse. Across the Detroit River there is a dirty, coal-fired power generation plant called Conners Creek. It's been dormant for over 10 years, but now Detroit Edison has decided that because of Michigan residents requiring more power, Conners Creek should be reopened. This is despite the fact that the plant's air pollution control equipment was last upgraded in the 1970s.

I don't need to remind the Minister of the Environment that Windsor's air cannot tolerate any more pollution from the United States. The Ontario Medical Association has identified Windsor's air as the worst in the country. We know it's going to lead to the premature deaths of over 1,800 people in Ontario. The Environmental Commissioner has requested that the Ministry of the Environment take steps to deal with this, but to date nothing has been done.

I know the minister is scheduled to meet with Michigan representatives on July 8, but that's too late. The plant is set to open on July 1. We need a commitment from the Minister of the Environment to prevent this plant from reopening.

ICE CREAM FESTIVAL

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Preparations are well under way for an exciting event to be held soon in my riding. Oxford county has long been known as the Dairy Capital of Canada. In celebration of our progressive dairy industry, we plan to host Canada's first Ice Cream Festival on July 4 and July 5, the weekend following Canada Day.

I believe this is the first ice cream festival that has ever been held in Canada. This unique event is being organized by the Oxford County Tourist Association with the support of the Dairy Farmers of Canada and Ontario and the city of Woodstock.

make other amendments to the Courts of Justice Act / Projet de loi 48, Loi visant à améliorer les services fournis aux familles par les tribunaux en facilitant l'expansion de la Cour de la famille et apportant d'autres modifications à la Loi sur les tribunaux judiciaires.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native Affairs): These amendments will confirm the overall authority of the Chief Justice for the Unified Family Court and will fully integrate the Unified Family Court within the General Division to accommodate its future expansion while maintaining its distinct and unique characteristics.

GORDIE KIRWAN EDUCATION
AMENDMENT ACT
(EXCEPTIONAL PUPILS), 1998
LOI GORDIE KIRWAN DE 1998
MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR L'ÉDUCATION
(ÉLÈVES EN DIFFICULTÉ)

Mr McGuinty moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 49, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to exceptional pupils to allow the Premier to keep his promise to Gordie Kirwan / Projet de loi 49, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne les élèves en difficulté pour permettre au premier ministre de tenir la promesse qu'il a faite à Gordie Kirwan.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): Under the Education Act, all students are required to leave once they reach the age of 21. The act does not have the flexibility to address the needs of adult special needs students like Gordie Kirwan.

In February 1995, Mike Harris promised Gordie's father, Rob, that if you formed the next government, he would amend the Education Act to remedy this problem. He has not done so. My bill will do so.

HEALTH CARE ACCOUNTABILITY
AND PATIENTS' BILL
OF RIGHTS ACT, 1998
LOI DE 1998 SUR L'OBLIGATION
DE RENDRE DES COMPTES
À L'ÉGARD DES SOINS DE SANTÉ
ET SUR LA DÉCLARATION
DES DROITS DES PATIENTS

Mrs Boyd moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 50, An Act to promote patients' rights and to increase accountability in Ontario's health care system / Projet de loi 50, Loi visant à promouvoir les droits des

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment: Bill Pt21, An Act respecting Canadian Information Processing Society of Ontario.

Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:
Pt18, An Act respecting Eastern Pentecostal Bible College.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

COURTS OF JUSTICE
AMENDMENT ACT
(IMPROVED FAMILY COURT), 1998
LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES TRIBUNAUX JUDICIAIRES
(AMÉLIORATION DE LA COUR
DE LA FAMILLE)

Mr Harnick moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 48, An Act to Improve Court Services for Families by Facilitating Expansion of the Family Court and to

JUVENILE DELINQUENTS ACT
(ONTARIO), 1998
LOI DE 1998 SUR LES
JEUNES DÉLINQUANTS (ONTARIO)

Mr Jim Brown moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 52, An Act to curtail Repeat Offences by Juvenile Delinquents / Projet de loi 52. Loi visant à inciter les jeunes délinquants à ne pas récidiver.
The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?
All those in favour, please say "aye."
All those opposed, please say "nay."
In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I beg leave to inform the House that today the Clerk received the fifth report of the standing committee on government agencies.
Pursuant to standing order 105(g)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by this House.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I am pleased to announce that I have tabled the government's 1998-99 business plans for all the ministries. These documents demonstrate our commitment to open and accountable public service and a businesslike approach to managing public resources.

This is the third year that all ministries have produced business plans. In conjunction with the Ontario budget and the printed estimates, they provide more disclosure than ever before to the Legislature and to the public on how taxpayers' money is being spent.

This year we focused on improving our performance measures to allow the public to see more clearly how we are meeting our objectives. I want to thank my colleagues Bill Grimmer, John Baird, Harry Danford, Dan Newman, Lillian Ross and Bruce Smith, who served on a special review committee of parliamentary assistants, for their hard work in reviewing and refining performance measures for each ministry.

The ministries have included an annual report on significant achievements over the past year and a summary of expenditures. The business plans set ambitious targets for improvements, and we'll be holding the ministries accountable for achieving results.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): This bill codifies the rights of residents of Ontario who receive health care services in the form of a Patients' Bill of Rights. The bill provides for the appointment of a health care standards commissioner as an officer of this Legislature who will perform functions such as participating in the setting of health care standards and the development of complaints procedures, monitoring health care standards, and making recommendations to the Minister of Health and to the Legislature.

The bill establishes whistle blowing protection for employees of providers of health care services and the bill requires conspicuous posting of the Patients' Bill of Rights and of the whistle blowing protection provisions.

**LOI DE 1998 SUR LE
CENTRE APPELÉ SUNNYBROOK
AND WOMEN'S COLLEGE
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE**
Bill 51, An Act to amalgamate Sunnybrook Hospital and Orthopaedic and Arthritis Hospital to the assets and liabilities of Women's College Hospital to the amalgamated hospital / Projet de loi 51, Loi fusionnant les hôpitaux nommés Sunnybrook Hospital et Orthopaédic et Arthritis Hospital et transférant l'actif et le passif de l'hôpital nommé Women's College Hospital à l'hôpital issu de la fusion.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): This is a bill that will enable the three hospitals to proceed with the directives of the Health Services Restructuring Commission, and it does have the support of all of the three hospitals.

Mr Stewart moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pt20, An Act representing Peterborough General Hospital.
The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Cheng Wan To of Toronto, Margaret Crawford of St Catharines, Duncan Crone of Barrie, Robert Darragh of Campbellford, Leila Ann Gordon of Kagawong on Manitoulin Island, Eileen Hamilton of Wroxeter, Fred and Nancy Joudrey of Peterborough, J. David Kennedy of Guelp, Laurence King of Eganville, Terry and Betty O'Brien of Eganville, Mary Packard of Haliburton, Lucienne Prévos of Sudbury, Don Singer of Port Rowan, Frederick Speed of Toronto, Robert Tardif of Windsor, Sivasambo Thiagaraja of Toronto, and Stella Yule of Toronto as well.

The Honourable Hilary Weston, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, will be joining me in officially recognizing the recipients tonight on the grand staircase of this historic building, commencing at 6 o'clock. All members of the House are invited.

Following our Intergenerational Week, our Caregivers Week and its symposium, and our third week, Safety and Security Week, the ceremony will be a wonderful finale to our Seniors' Month activities. This year's events have been especially exciting as we prepare for 1999, which the United Nations has declared as the International Year of Older Persons.

Across Ontario our seniors are making a real difference in their local communities. I know that all members of this House will join me in offering all seniors in this province our congratulations, and especially those special individuals we are acknowledging this evening for their outstanding contributions to making Ontario one of the greatest places in the world to live, to work and to raise and care for a family.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to request unanimous consent of the entire assembly to allow the Minister of Health an opportunity to tell the House how much these full-page ads in the newspapers cost the taxpayers of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Agreed? I heard a no.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I am pleased to comment on the remarks dealing with seniors. I think everybody in this province appreciates the tremendous asset we have in our seniors. It points out that 80% of the volunteer work is now done by seniors. Certainly, I don't think Ontario could function without the resources of our seniors who are doing so much good work in virtually every organization. We salute them and salute the 21 who will be recognized.

When I heard the minister was making an announcement, I thought perhaps he was going to revisit a commitment the government made before the election, and that was that seniors would not be paying user fees on drugs. The document they still keep and talk to me about — I will be visiting some of them this week — said that they would use the fair share health levy to fund it. I am quoting here: "Under this plan there will be no new user fees."

The seniors in my community have not forgotten that pledge. They are now paying a substantial amount in user fees and they will hold Mike Harris accountable for that.

Priority initiatives for this year are building on the progress that has been made in the areas that mean the most to people: education, health care, social services and personal safety. For example:

The Ministry of Health will begin implementing an eight-year expansion of long-term-care services. It will also continue the expansion of mental health services. These strategic investments will support health care restructuring and ensure Ontarians have access to quality services, when they need them and close to home.

The community policing partnership program in the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services is committed to helping municipalities hire up to 1,000 new front-line officers to enhance public safety in communities.

And we will be continuing to focus on improving the lives of children by bringing together services from several different ministries that support Ontario families.

I want to reaffirm our government's intention to continue to move forward towards achieving all the goals that it promised the people of Ontario three years ago: a strong and prosperous economy, good jobs for Ontario's workers, safe communities, high-quality education for our children, a first-class health care system and an innovative, accountable public service.

We recognize that the dollars we spend belong to taxpayers, and we are accountable for spending this money wisely.

SENIOR ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]): It is a great honour to announce today that the province is recognizing the outstanding volunteer efforts of 22 very special Ontario seniors through the presentation of the Ontario Senior Achievement Awards.

Our theme for this, the fourth and final week of Seniors' Month, is volunteerism, and we are celebrating all of the efforts of Ontario's 1.4 million seniors. In fact, 80% of all the volunteer work done in this province is done by our senior citizens.

Today's seniors are showing real leadership in their efforts on behalf of communities all across our province. Throughout their lives, they have displayed that special community spirit that builds and maintains the high quality of life we've come to appreciate in Ontario.

This year's Senior Achievement Awards recipients have seen what needed to be done in their communities. They responded by taking on a number of very special and important volunteer efforts in their senior years. One such recipient this evening founded a library in her community. Several have organized seniors' groups where none previously existed, creating new recreational opportunities and becoming stronger voices for seniors. Others volunteer in schools, lead fund-raising efforts and support multiculturalism in our province.

I'm pleased to announce this year's recipients to the members of the House. They are Helen Bell of Nepean, George Blyth of Colborne, Sam Bowman of Markham,

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): I am responding to the statement by the Chairman of Management Board with respect to the labelling of the government's business plans for 1998-99.

I have to say it is a plan that is not working for the ordinary taxpayer in Ontario. This is a government that likes to boast that it does more for less, but the taxpayers of Ontario are receiving less service at more cost.

With the gutting of the civil service, within the department there is less service. We have government by 1-800 number. It is very difficult for any ordinary resident in Ontario to contact — whether it's the Family Responsibility Office, Workers' Compensation Board or what have you.

Even more frightening is the vision that is contained in here with respect to health care. Here we are dealing with a government that is in the process of closing some 36 hospitals in Ontario, despite the Premier's promise not to close any hospitals in Ontario. Here we're dealing with growing waiting lists and less service in our hospitals because this government has forced the layoff of over 10,000 nurses.

Here we're dealing with a government that talks about long-term care, but can't even get its act organized to give money for home care needed in our communities. One quarter of the way through the fiscal year, three months into the fiscal year, CCACs still don't know what they're getting from this government.

Here is a government that promises money for long-term care, yet in Ottawa-Carleton they are going to be providing, over eight years, 1,280 beds. The waiting list today is over 1,400 beds. What's going to happen in eight years' time?

This sad and sorry litany continues within these so-called business plans, where we find tuition being raised in education by over 60% and yet there is no plan here to help the students of ordinary working families, middle-class families, here in Ontario to get the education to help them further their lives and become contributing members of our community.

We also find that in terms of developmental services, services for the developmentally disabled, this government is saying, "Make more with less funds." Yet we have crying needs in the area of the developmentally delayed in terms of dyslexic, in terms of autistic homes, and yet we find this government wanting to close down beds, remove programs, use existing funds to try to meet a need it cannot cope with within existing resources.

This is not a government that's listening. This is a government that likes to spend taxpayers' dollars on promoting its fine achievements, whereas those moneys care and adequate services to serve the taxpayers in Ontario. The list goes on. In here we find the plan for the Attorney General, while at the same time, through the cuts, through municipal downloading, we find there's less

SENIOR ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I'm pleased to have an opportunity to respond to the statement by the minister responsible for seniors. He is certainly right that we all owe a lot to the seniors of this province. It is quite fitting during Seniors' Month that we recognize their very special abilities, their special contributions to our community. Every one of us here knows of seniors who contribute heavily to their communities today and all of us know that the seniors of today were the taxpayers of yesterday who created the services that this government is tearing apart. While we recognize the efforts and the abilities and the contributions of seniors, we must also recognize that many of them are very disappointed at seeing the work of their lifetime eroded by this government. I want to say very clearly to the minister responsible for seniors that while we all appreciate the truly volunteer activities that seniors undertake in our communities, there are thousands of unsung heroes out there who are volunteering in a very different sense, looking after their aged partners, their aged relatives, looking after their disabled children with no recognition at all — no recognition in terms of service provision, no recognition in terms of support, no recognition in terms of respite. So while I join the minister absolutely in his celebration of the award winners and their very fine contribution, I want us in this Legislature to clearly recognize the efforts of those unsung heroes who are the providers of long-term care within their homes.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): The government has indeed presented its business plans for 1998-99. Unfortunately, the business plans that have been presented today bear absolutely no relationship to reality. For example, I turn to the section on children and it says that "the government is very proud of its agenda with respect to children and the implementation of early intervention and prevention initiatives."

Is this the same government that took \$37 a month out of the mouths of pregnant mothers and said that it was doing it because it had evidence that pregnant mothers were spending the money on beer? Is this the same government that has cut 22% from social assistance, when we know that over half of the social assistance recipients in this province are children? Is this the same government that through its cuts to education has ensured that boards of education have had to lay off speech therapists, that boards of education have had to lay off many of the other workers who work in the system to ensure that children who had learning disabilities were diagnosed at an early age? My God, a ghostwriter must have written this section on children, because he certainly isn't in touch with what's happening in Ontario today as a result of the cuts of the Harris government.

Then I turn to education. The minister talks about a tremendous year of progress. When you put up the tuition fees for university students by \$1,100 a year, I guess Conservatives call that progress. And when you put up tuition fees for college students by \$600 a year, I guess Conservatives call that progress. And when students who want to go to university now have to face the prospect of a \$40,000, \$50,000, \$60,000 debt, I guess this government calls that progress. And when boards of education — the Niagara board is looking at having to close 37 schools, I guess this government calls that progress. The Toronto board of education has to lay off 600 teachers and put 8,000 adult learners out in the street. This government calls that progress.

It gets better. The environment: The government talks about building on a better, stronger, clearer environmental agenda. It's very clear. The second report in a week came out saying:

"Environment Report Savages Queen's Park

"A scathing report card on the Ontario government's environmental performance during its third year in office says the province has shown an almost total lack of action on protecting the environment."

I know what this is, this is more taxpayer-paid-for propaganda. It has nothing to do with the reality of what's happening in the province — nothing.

FÊTE DE LA SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE

SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE DAY

Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: May we have unanimous consent to mark Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day?

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Agreed?

Agreed.

Mr. Morin: En ce 24 juin, Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Patron des canadiens-français, j'ai le plaisir de transmettre mes vœux, ceux de tous mes collègues transmettant à Queen's Park ainsi que de la population de l'Ontario à tous les Québécois à l'occasion de leur Fête nationale.

Like our ancestors, we too have been confronted by forces that have threatened to tear our country apart. It is important to remember that twice Quebecers rejected separation, twice they chose an undivided Canada. Ontario has always played a key role within Canada and has earned the respect of Quebec. As the country's richest, most populated province, it is Ontario's duty to set an example of true understanding and generosity. In this light, let us go out and show the world that Canada is more than a country; it is a state of mind, one that is open to taking a fresh, new outlook on the present and the future.

1420

Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day is also symbolic of the strength and dynamism of the francophone presence in North America and of the pride Quebecers so rightly have in their culture and their tradition.

Il m'est agréable d'offrir à tous mes compatriotes canadiens-français, ainsi qu'à tous les Québécois, mes meilleurs vœux à l'occasion de cette grande fête de la concorde, de l'unité du Canada retrouvée et de la fraternité entre tous les Canadiens. Heureuse Saint-Jean-Baptiste à tous.

M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) : Avec fierté aujourd'hui, comme Franco-Ontarien, j'aimerais signaler

In 1925, the Quebec Legislature declared June 24 an official holiday. It was originally a day for French Canadians to come together and celebrate as one big family, a day to affirm and promote patriotic unity. It is in this spirit that I ask all my compatriots to reflect on the future of our beautiful country, Canada, whose birthday we will celebrate next week. At both the constitutional level and in the area of national unity, Canada still seems to be evolving. In other words, we still have a tremendous amount of work to do. Our ancestors paved the way for us. They managed to overcome the obstacles that confronted them and to keep our country as one.

La Fête de la Saint-Jean trouve son origine dans la coutume fort répandue dans plusieurs pays de célébrer le solstice d'été par des feux de joie. Les premiers feux de la Saint-Jean au Canada datent de 1638. Cette pratique fut amenée sur les rives du Saint-Laurent par les premiers colons venus de France. Ce rituel millénaire a inspiré l'éditeur de journaux Ludger Duvernay qui, le 24 juin 1834, convia un soixantaine de personnes à un banquet champêtre pour discuter de l'avent du peuple canadien-français. Duvernay voulait unir les Canadiens français dans un même sentiment national. Ainsi naquit la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste qui prendra des ans de plus en plus d'envergure. Elle est célébrée avec éclat à Montréal et à Québec et on organise des défilés de la Saint-Jean dans certaines localités du Nouveau-Brunswick.

Les Canadiens et les Canadiennes d'expression française trouvent en ce jour l'occasion de réaffirmer les liens et les valeurs qui les unissent d'un bout à l'autre du pays. Au fil des ans, la Saint-Jean est devenu la fête de tous les Québécois qui se rassemblent au cours de diverses manifestations visant à célébrer une société qui évolue dans la générosité, l'entraide et le respect de sa diversité.

de la part du NPD ce que c'est d'être Franco-Ontarien ici dans notre belle province et ce que ça veut dire pour moi.

Je veux vous donner un peu mon histoire, parce que je pense que beaucoup de monde, quand on regarde la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, ont l'habitude de le faire un peu à travers les yeux d'autres personnes qui ne vivent pas en Ontario, une vie très différente. On regarde la province de Québec qui, comme on le sait, a une histoire qui est très réelle et très fort envers tout ce qui s'est passé envers la francophonie canadienne. Mais une autre réalité au Canada, c'est celle des Franco-Ontariens. Moi, je me trouve un petit gars du nord de l'Ontario qui a un père qui vient de Ville-Marie au Québec. Lui a décidé — pas lui, il n'avait pas le choix, c'est son père qui l'a emmené. Ils partaient du Québec pour venir en Ontario pour s'établir et commencer un commerce.

Dans le commencement des années 1900, mon grand-père est venu dans le bout de Timmins comme bûcheron, comme «jlobber», pour défricher la terre de notre coin de la province, pour être capable de gagner le pain pour sa famille, et avec ça, l'autre bord de la famille, les Leroux, qui sont venus une génération avant ça, la troisième génération du côté de mon grand-père Leroux, qui est venue dans le nord de l'Ontario pour travailler dans les mines. C'est comme ça que l'on a vu comment le monde, les Franco-Ontariens, s'est rendu dans notre partie de la province. Ils sont venus pour l'ouvrage, ils sont venus pour être capables de gagner leur pain pour leur famille.

Mais en venant ici, cette génération-là était des francophones qui ne parlaient pas l'anglais au commencement, des francophones qui venaient du Québec, qui avaient une expérience très difficile qui aussi ont élevé leur famille, leurs enfants — mon père, ma mère — dans un environnement qui était francophone à la maison mais anglophone hors de la maison.

Je ne suis pas Québécois, je suis Ontarien et j'en suis fier. Mais je dis aussi que je suis Franco-Ontarien, quelque chose que certaines personnes ne comprennent pas. Si aujourd'hui je parle encore le français et que mes enfants le parlent et, je l'espère, leurs enfants aussi, c'est parce qu'avant nous il y a eu certains dans notre communauté qui étaient nécessaires pour permettre à la communauté francophone de vivre en français ici en Ontario. On regarde dans nos écoles, on regarde les services qui ont été mis en place, à cette heure avec le Collège Boréal, le Collège des Grands Lacs, la Cité collégiale. On regarde les services en français qui sont disponibles à travers notre gouvernement provincial, à travers le gouvernement

Je regarde aujourd'hui et je peux vous dire que, et je veux donner cette idée au gouvernement sans être trop partisan, comme Franco-Ontarien je commence d'avoir peur. Je regarde le recul qui commence à se voir plus ici en Ontario. Par exemple, demain apparemment on va attendre la possibilité que le gouvernement de M. Harris commence à faire des changements à TFO qui vont affecter notre habilité en tant que francophones de communiquer à travers cette province et d'être capables de nous informer de ce qui se passe en Ontario pour les Franco-Ontariens. On regarde ce qui arrive avec la dévolution des services dans les municipalités et on demande : est-ce que, quand les services seront transférés de la province aux municipalités, le gouvernement de M. Harris va accepter la Loi 17 pour s'assurer que les droits aux services en français seront respectés une fois qu'ils seront transférés ? Je veux finir sur ce point et dire que je suis Franco-Ontarien et je veux avoir l'habilité de ne parler que le français à la maison, mais je veux avoir l'habilité de le vivre dans ma province. Pour ce faire, j'ai besoin d'un gouvernement qui m'appuie et qui s'assure que ces services-là sont en place pas seulement pour moi, mais pour la génération de ma fille et après les autres.

En somme, bâtissons un meilleur Ontario pour tous. **M. Marcel Beaubien (Lambton) :** C'est très intéressant d'entendre les commentaires de mon collègue de Cochrane-Sud, parce que vraiment moi aussi je suis venu au monde au Québec et j'ai été démenagé en Ontario comme mon confrère.

Aujourd'hui, les Canadiens français à travers le pays célèbrent la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Plusieurs communautés francophones à travers la province ont organisé des activités pour célébrer le 24 juin. Que l'on soit franco-phonie à Toronto, à Ottawa, à Petroliia, à North Bay ou à Timmins, les gens se réunissent pour fêter en français. Récemment mon collègue le ministre des Affaires francophones, lors de son allocation au congrès de l'ACFO, a réitéré l'importance des services en français qu'accorde le gouvernement de l'Ontario envers la communauté franco-ontarienne.

Une des plus grandes réussites de ce gouvernement c'est la création des 12 conseils scolaires de langue française à travers la province, la gestion autonome de nos écoles françaises par des Franco-Ontariens. En plus, nous avons accordé un financement juste et équitable afin que tous les élèves de la province aient accès à la même qualité d'enseignement. Que l'enfant demeure à Hecars, à Orléans, à Cornwall ou à Paincourt, le financement sera juste et équitable. Il faut reconnaître que c'est un geste important, un geste qui n'a pas seulement un effet symbolique pour les francophones, mais un geste qui a un impact positif sur toute la communauté ontarienne.

La Loi sur les services en français permet de désigner des agences gouvernementales qui peuvent desservir et

The Speaker: All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

McGuinty, Dalton
Micalash, Frank
Morrn, Gilles E.
Patten, Richard
Phillips, Gerry
Pouliot, Gilles
Ramsey, David
Ruprecht, Tony
Sillipo, Tony
Wildman, Bud
Wood, Len

Agostino, Dominic
Barilucci, Rick
Bisson, Gilles
Boyd, Marlon
Bradley, James J.
Caplan, David
Christopherson, David
Colle, Mike
Conway, Sean G.
Cullen, Alex

Curling, Alvin
Duncan, Dwight
Gerritsen, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hampton, Howard
Kornos, Peter
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Lankin, Frances
Lessard, Wayne
Marchesse, Rosano
Martel, Shelley
Martin, Tony

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 63; the nays are 36.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): There's the money. Buy me an election.

The Speaker: Order. Members, please take your seats. You're out of order. I'm not going to warn the members. Members for Ottawa West and Hamilton East.

The Speaker: I name the members for Ottawa West and Hamilton East. They're both named. Please, you've been named.

Mr Cullen and Mr Agostino were escorted from the chamber.

The Speaker: Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. Premier, you know we've spent a lot of time in this House bringing to the attention of yourself and the government the consequences of your cuts to hospitals, and we have focused largely on the human cost. We've talked about patients being stacked up in hospital corridors, we've talked about patients being turned away from emergency wards and we've talked about what happens when there aren't enough nurses to provide basic nursing care inside our hospitals.

Today I want to talk about something else. I want to talk about the financial cost, and in particular I want to talk about the Mike Harris hospital-closing tax. We have learned that communities in this province are about to pay for the privilege of having you close their hospitals against their wishes. They are about to pay, for part of your restructuring plans, \$400 million. My question to you is quite simple: How does it feel to be the first Premier in Ontario who is charging communities \$400 million to close their hospitals against their will?

garantir des services en français à leur communauté. Malheureusement, la communauté francophone peut avoir accès à plus de 184 agences désignées à travers la province, dont 54, soit le tiers, ont été désignées depuis 1995.

Nous établirons des protocoles d'entente avec les municipalités qui accepteront d'offrir des programmes au nom du gouvernement à leur communauté tout en respectant l'obligation de fournir des services en français au même niveau que ceux qui existent présentement.

En plus, ce gouvernement a entrepris plusieurs initiatives depuis 1995 pour stimuler l'économie ontarienne, réduire les impôts afin que toute la population ontarienne, incluant les francophones, puisse en bénéficier.

Voici notre vision de l'avenir pour les francophones de l'Ontario : leur participation pleine et entière à la croissance de notre province. Je souhaite à toute la communauté francophone de l'Ontario une bonne Saint-Jean-Baptiste.

DEFERRED VOTES

ELECTION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1998 LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES ELECTIONS

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 36, An Act to amend the Election Act and the Election Finances Act, and to make related amendments to other statutes / Projet de loi 36, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale et la Loi sur le financement des élections et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Call in the members; there will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1429 to 1434.

The Speaker: All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armott, Ted
Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Bassett, Isabel
Beaubien, Marcel
Boushy, Dave
Brown, Jim
Carr, Gary
Carroll, Jack
Chudleigh, Ted
Clement, Tony
Cunningham, Diane
Dandorf, Harry
Doyle, Ed
Eves, Ernie L.
Flaherty, Jim
Ford, Douglas B.
Fox, Gary
Froese, Tom
Grimmett, Bill
Hardeman, Ernie
Hamick, Charles
Harris, Michael D.
Hodgson, Chris
Hudak, Tim
Jackson, Cameron
Johns, Helen
Johnson, Bert
Johnson, David
Jordan, W. Leo
Kells, Morley
Klees, Frank
Leach, Al
Leadston, Gary L.
Mariano, Margaret
Martinuk, Gerry
Munro, Julia
Murdoch, Bill
Newman, Dan
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Pettit, Trevor
Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Ross, Lillian
Runciman, Robert W.
Sampson, Rob
Saunderson, William
Sheehan, Frank
Skarica, Toni
Smith, Bruce
Snodden, John
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Tison, David
Tsubouchi, David H.
Turnbull, David
VanKoughnet, Bill
Weishaar, Wayne
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wood, Bob
Young, Terence H.

1440

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Like most of the questions concerning health care, the preamble and the allegations are simply not true and have about as much veracity as your critic for the Ministry of Health, who has been discredited now all across the province by virtually every case he's raised dealing with hospitals.

If you are referring to the fact that we have for the first time in the history of this province increased the capital funding for new facilities so that the local share is only \$400 million instead of \$500 million, \$600 million or \$700 million, as it would have been under your government or the previous administration, for new facilities, for new capital, for new equipment, if you're referring to the fact that we increased the provincial share to record high levels, why don't you tell the public that?

Mr McGuinty: Premier, you specifically said during the course of the campaign that you were not going to close any hospitals. You now have plans to close 35 and to make matters worse, to make it obscene, you're changing communities to close their hospitals. And we're not talking pennies here.

In Kingston, where you're closing the Hotel Dieu Hospital, you're leaving the community with a \$33-million bill. In Hamilton, you're shutting down three hospitals against the wishes of the community. Your hospital-closing tax is going to cost people there \$23 million. In my home town, Ottawa, your hospital-closing tax amounts to \$38 million. It's bad enough that you broke your promise, but now you're going to charge people for the privilege of closing their hospitals against their will.

I want a straight answer from you: What do you tell the people out there? What do you tell them after you promised not to close hospitals but now you're going to charge them for the privilege of closing their hospitals against their will?

Hon Mr Harris: I tell them that when I was in Thunder Bay, they all came to me and said: "Thank you, Premier. Thank you for giving us the new dollars for a brand-new hospital. Thank you for 70% dollars. Thank you for allowing us to restructure. Thank you for new wings" —

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order, order. Final supplementary. I'm sorry, Premier.

Hon Mr Harris: The member specifically mentioned Kingston. Here's what Kingston said — nothing about closing: "We're moving 10 blocks to the west and the commission listened to our concerns." Major General Frank Norman, chairman of the board of directors of Kingston General Hospital, said, "They've given us an opportunity to take a vision which we had in Kingston 30 years ago." Finally after 30 years some government had the courage to let them move and expand and grow.

The Speaker: Final supplementary. Mr McGuinty: Perhaps the Premier should pay a visit to Kingston. Seventy thousand people signed a petition in Kingston against the closure of the Hotel Dieu Hospital.

SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): This question is for the Premier. On May 7 you attended a fund-raiser attended by 700 people in St Catharines. At that time there was a specific reference contained within your speech to Ian Strathern and his parents. Ian Strathern is 22 years of age. He broke his neck as a result of a hockey injury in 1995 that has left him quadriplegic. You were very sympathetic to him in the course of your speech. You said you would not rest until you got him all the help he needed.

His parents are teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. They're paying \$1,500 a week, \$6,000 a month; they've invested \$100,000 in renovations in their home and they have purchased a new van. You said you would not rest until you helped Ian and his parents. That was nearly eight weeks ago. He has applied for special funding. He has been turned down. You said you would not rest until you helped Ian. What are you going to do about it?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): You're right. I will not rest until we have resolved concerns. Due to the privacy act, I can't deal with specific actions or specific files. But I was in St Catharines. There was a record turnout of enthusiastic supporters donating to our party and our cause and wanted to see that extended, including a gentleman whom I don't want to name; you have. Certainly he was enthusiastically there, supportive of our agenda as well. I can assure you of this.

The local member has had a number of meetings. I know the Ministry of Health has as well. I'm satisfied that at the end of the day, while I can't get into specifics, his concerns will be able to be addressed, with insurance, with the community and through programs and assistance from our government.

Mr McGuinly: Premier, clearly you don't understand what you did that night. You took advantage of a political opportunity to score some cheap political points to create the impression that you had a genuine interest in this man and that you could do something for him.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order. Minister, you must withdraw that comment. That's out of order.

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I withdraw "sleazy."

The Speaker: Minister, you know what? That's not the way it's done, and that isn't parliamentary either.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. It's a hot day today, I understand that and I understand that it's going to be a rather difficult question period. But please, I caution the members. We know the parliamentary language that's acceptable and what isn't. Please refrain from using it, because it's only going to raise the temperature of this debate.

Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock): What about the air-conditioning?

The Speaker: There isn't any air-conditioning; it's broken. I'm doing my best, member for St Catharines-Brock. If you want to jump in if you've got your Phillips handy, we'll take advantage of that as well.

Supplementary.

Mr McGuinly: The article that appeared the following day in the St Catharines Standard was entitled, "Family Finds Hope."

"We're still reeling from the good news," Dave Strathern, Ian's father, said Friday. "It was a shock and a major breakthrough, as far as I'm concerned."

Wallace Pidgeon, deputy press secretary to the Premier, said: "The Premier wanted to assure the Stratherns and Ian that he was in their corner. We're going to do what we can to ensure that Ian can get the best services possible."

That was eight weeks ago. This family is about to go bankrupt. They've got a son who's on a ventilator. He requires round-the-clock care. You stood up in a public forum and you said, "This man is my genuine concern and I'm going to do something about it." That was eight weeks ago. You took advantage of a situation. Stand up now and tell us that you're going to fix this today.

Hon Mr Harris: The allegations are about the most silly I've ever heard in 17 years of politics.

Without naming names, there was an individual who was a supporter who came to the fund-raising dinner in support of the Premier of the province of Ontario. I agreed to meet with him. I met with an individual there that evening. I acknowledged that for 100-odd years of Ontario government, under Conservative and Liberal and NDP governments, there was not a program available that would meet all the needs of that individual's son.

I said at that time and I repeat today: "I am on your side. The Liberals may not have found one in five years, the NDP may not have found one in five years, but we will make sure that we do everything we can. You have the

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Hon Mr Harris: If there was one shred of truth in the allegations, I would agree with the member, but there is not.

happen?

been told they're on their own. How can you let that for funding, he's been told that's the end of the story, he's been shut down. He's been told he has no right of appeal interests of Ian at heart if eight weeks have gone by? He's claim to be listening? How can you claim to have the

How can you claim to be compassionate? How can you claim to be listening? How can you claim to have the

you had no intention whatsoever to do that.

help and you said you were going to give it. Obviously

teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. They asked for your

They will tell you that you have let him down. They are

family down. You haven't spoken with them recently.

going to fix it." It has been eight weeks. You have let the

"I can care for this young man. I'm going to help him. I'm

situation. This was a public forum. You stood up and said:

hooked up to a ventilator for life. You took advantage of a

do it just like that. This is one young man, 22 years of age,

them instantly. If you want to shut down schools, you can

to deal with striking school teachers, you can deal with

close hospitals, you can close them like that. If you want

Mr McGuinly: Premier, it seems to me if you want to

can assure you they still do.

Premier of the province of Ontario in your corner." And I

As you know, hospital restructuring is all about building, expanding and improving services for patients and, if

their own priorities.

arm's-length agency from the ministry and they decide

member is referring to is one by the Health Services

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I think the ad the

stuff when your government is in fact doing the opposite?

treatment they deserve? How can you justify this kind of

turned away, that more and more people can't get the

opposite is true, that more and more people are being

sensical advertising when people out there know that the

upon tens of thousands of dollars for this kind of non-

How can your government justify spending the tens

being turned away.

such that surgery is being delayed, treatment cannot be

you've become the government. The layoff of nurses is

the city of Toronto come to at least \$300 million since

10 hospitals. We know the budget cuts to hospitals just in

the Toronto area we know you're closing, literally, over

is wonderful, that it's going to be a great thing, but just in

You're trying to tell people that the health care system

out the rest of the week, we'll find it in other places.

Globe and Mail and the Toronto Sun. I suppose if we wait

paid for by taxpayers, in the Toronto Star, the Toronto

government's advertising, this time full-page advertising

for the Premier. It concerns another round of your

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is

there are any savings, reinvesting those dollars, and more that were wasted, in the system that you presided over.

The HSRC, if that's the ad you're referring to, obviously felt it was important to inform people about what their goals and objectives were and make sure people knew how to contact them for further information.

Mr Hampton: It's a very good script you're reading from, Premier, but you should ask someone to rewrite it.

We checked the language, the choice of words in these ads, with the propaganda that you've been turning out, your very partisan propaganda. Whoever is writing this is also writing your partisan propaganda. In fact, there is a 1-800 number they ask you to call, and when you call the number what you get is your Ministry of Health, Premier.

As far as your arm's length, that is nonsense.

The point is this: You make a lot of boasts in these ads. My colleague the member for London Centre put forward a private member's bill today which will bring some accountability to the system, which will hold you accountable for the kinds of statements you are making in these ads.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question.

Mr Hampton: I want to ask you, Premier, are you prepared to support that kind of patients' rights accountability bill to ensure that they —

The Speaker: Thank you, Premier?

1500

Hon Mr Harris: Let me deal specifically with the allegations of advertising because, as you know, we've cut the advertising budgets from when you were in office. I think all political parties and all governments have felt it important that the public know what's going on. I know you criticized us that we weren't communicating enough, we weren't consulting enough. One headline said, "Hey, Mickey, Talk To Us." They wanted to know more about what was going on.

We have done some advertising directly. If the language is the same as the Health Services Restructuring Commission, it's because we've taken our cue from them and we are supportive of the efforts that they are doing. But I would certainly ask you to contrast that with what the Toronto Star said about your \$6.6-million advertising. I think they called it "Smile Ontario." This was, as I understand it, a 34-page glossy brochure —

The Speaker: Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr Hampton: It's obvious that the Premier has given up on the arm's-length argument. He now acknowledges that this is just as partisan a political advertising as the nonsense you're churning out of your offices. It's exactly the same thing. In fact, the 1-800 number is a Ministry of Health number.

My question to the Premier was this: We introduced a private member's bill today, a patients' rights bill, a health care accountability bill, which would ensure that there is a commissioner created to oversee the health care system and to report on the health care system and to hold you accountable for cuts to hospitals, cuts to home care and cuts across the health care budget.

POVERTY

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): Also a question to the Premier: You might want to know that when nurses and other health care advocates have raised the kinds of questions we raise in this bill with your minister and with your bureaucrats, they say they've just begun to think about them. You might take a lesson from some of the work we've done, and you might want to read it very carefully if you really are interested in health care accountability.

My second question is about people who are homeless. The city of Toronto homelessness task force is about ready to report, but they've already raised a very serious issue. It's about the increasing number of single mothers who are living with their children in poverty. More and more of these mothers and their children are in fact forced to use shelters for the homeless as a place to live. Food banks tell us that 70% of these women go hungry more than one day a month and their children also go hungry.

New question, leader of the third party.

proceedings.
to name you. There needs to be some decorum in these proceedings.
You're out of order. If I have to warn you again, I'll have to name you. There needs to be some decorum in these proceedings.

The Speaker: Member for Algoma, I'm warning you to come order. Beaches-Woodbine, Sudbury East, Sudbury and St Catharines, I'm not going to warn you again.

The Speaker: Member for Beaches-Woodbine.

Interjection.

please.

The Speaker: Member for Algoma, come to order, please.

Interjections.

second-last day of the House to introduce it.
you were serious, you wouldn't have waited until the second-last day of the House to introduce it.
chance, to review it and take a look at it, even though, if you were serious, you wouldn't have waited until the second-last day of the House to introduce it.

With regard to a specific bill, which I understand has been introduced today, we would be happy, when we get a chance, to review it and take a look at it, even though, if you were serious, you wouldn't have waited until the second-last day of the House to introduce it.

Hon Mr Harris: With reference to the ads placed by the Health Services Restructuring Commission, of course they're arm's-length and non-partisan. If our ads look like theirs, it just confirms ours are non-partisan as well, which of course is what government advertising should be. It's for sharing information, it's for getting input, it's consulting and informing.

The Speaker: Member for Ottawa Centre, come to order. Thank you.

Interjection.

order.

The Speaker: Order. Look, we need some order here, minister and members from the opposition. We need some order.

Interjections.

I want to know, Premier, if you're interested in ensuring that people receive the health care that they're due, will you support that patients' rights bill? Will you support that health care accountability bill to hold you accountable for the kinds of statements that you make in these ads?

is fully implemented, the top 10% of taxpayers, that's the wealthy ones, will pay more than when we took office than under the NDP. They'll pay 45% of their revenue instead of 42%. The top 1% will pay even more. The tax cut actually benefits the low-income earners and the working class and the middle class of this province. Those are the facts.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): My question is also to the Premier and it concerns the recent appointment of your good friend William Farlinger to the board of Newcourt Credit Group.

Bill Farlinger, your friend and appointee to the chairmanship of Ontario Hydro, where he's paid, according to the most recent government of Ontario documentation, \$350,000 to provide leadership to the board of that multi-billion-dollar corporation, has this week apparently accepted an appointment to the board of Newcourt Credit Group, which is a large investment banking company with growing interests in the electricity and power business. My question is simply this: How is it that Mr Farlinger on the one hand can serve the interests of a very large

utility like Ontario Hydro as it prepares for the competitive marketplace, and serve on the board of directors of an investment banking house which, according to its own literature, has an increasing interest in the power business?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): When I think of the opposition launching a personal attack on a man of number of boards, Mr Farlinger in fact resigned from the Hongkong Bank of Canada to take this particular board position. He's on a number of other boards. That has been fully disclosed. Of course, this is nothing new, because you want the very best and brightest in business people.

For example, the NDP appointed Donald Fullerton, former chair and CEO of the CIBC, to be on the board, also on the board of Amoco Canada Petroleum; David Kerr, Brascan, Carena Developments; Arthur Sawchuk, Canadian Chemical Producers' Association, Avenor Inc and Manufacturers Life. So that's normal practice. We want people who are active, who are out there in the community. We make sure, and Mr Farlinger, a man of integrity makes sure —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr Conway: Premier, this is all about conflict of interest and public morality. What we have here is the chairman of a major power utility that is about to be broken up. We have Mr Farlinger, on the one hand, being paid \$350,000 to head Ontario Hydro at the very time it is about to be broken up in preparation for the competitive marketplace, and at the very time that he's heading Ontario Hydro with that prospect, he joins the board of an investment banking house that according to its own literature this past month is increasingly interested in getting into the electricity and power business.

How is that not a flaming conflict of interest? Do you not think so, and will you, if for no other reason than the protection of Ontarians' shareholder value in the multibillion-dollar corporation that is Ontario Hydro, direct Mr Farlinger not to accept that specific appointment to the board of that investment banking house?

Hon Mr Harris: Under your rules nobody would be eligible — if I look over the board of directors under the Liberals or the NDP — to serve on the board of Ontario Hydro. Clearly you want people who understand business and who are active and current. What is significant, though, is that we have asked Mr Farlinger, unlike when the Liberals were in office, to comply with all conflict rules. You guys didn't do that. We have done that. Mr Farlinger has done that. He will also have to comply with any potential conflicts, as will all the other members who are on the board. Too bad you didn't have those rules when you were in office.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is also for the Premier. The Premier tried very hard to miss the point, so I'll restate it for him. Premier, it's Mr Farlinger who as chair of Ontario Hydro has said that the people who buy power from Hydro may be stuck with stranded debt as high as \$30 billion as a result of your

government's changes. If we proceed down this direction you're going in, if we have this competitive market, the ratepayers will have to pick that up.

We understand that part of Mr Farlinger's job is to ensure the lowest cost. If Mr Farlinger is also working at Newcourt, which is financing new private competitors who will want to get as much of the market as possible but not have to take on any of the stranded debt, I want to know, who is Mr Farlinger working for, the private interests that don't want to handle any of that stranded debt or the ratepayers of Ontario who are going to get stuck with that debt?

Hon Mr Harris: It's very clear under the conflict-of-interest rules and under the guidelines, and much clearer now that we've come into office and clarified them, that Mr Farlinger's first priority will be to Ontario Hydro, to hydro consumers and to the taxpayers of the province of Ontario. Any conflict between that and any of the boards that he serves on — I might add it's the same for all the directors, a number who are still there that you appointed who also have potential conflicts. That's why we have conflict legislation. That's why we have the rules. That's why they have to be declared. I can tell you I think all members of the Hydro board, including the ones you appointed who are in those potential conflict situations, are honourable than Bill Farlinger.

Mr Hampton: Again the Premier tries to confuse the issue. I'm not concerned about whether Mr Farlinger is honourable or not. I'm concerned about who here is protecting the public interest, who has their eye on the public interest.

We've already seen with your casino fiascos that the very people who advised you on setting up casinos then went over and worked for the other side, worked for the people who were going to benefit from those casinos. I don't see where the public interest has been protected there at all. I see a bunch of your friends getting rich as the result of a policy decision by your government.

I'm very worried here that the very person who is supposed to be protecting the public interest at Ontario Hydro is now over as one of the operating minds of private sector companies that want to get into competition and want to stick Ontario Hydro and the ratepayers of Ontario Hydro with \$30 billion of stranded debt. The question is this: Who is looking after the public interest here? Mr Farlinger can't work both sides of the fence at the same time and your government can't either.

Hon Mr Harris: Here is a member of a government and a cabinet that took this province to the brink of bankruptcy. Who was looking after the interests of the taxpayers of the province? Who look tax rates so high that investment and jobs fled the province? Who has a five-year record of minus 10,000 jobs total in the province of Ontario? Who has the record of protecting the taxpayers' money with an \$11.2-billion annual deficit? Who has the record of taking that total debt from \$40 billion to about \$95 billion in a record four-and-a-half-year period?

1520

I'll tell you who's protecting the taxpayers. This new government, this new caucus, this cabinet, this Premier and this administration are fighting for and protecting the taxpayers of Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker: A point of order?

Hon Mr Harris: I think it's important. There was a phone number, I think, that was read out into the record and it was alleged that you could get the Ministry of Health at that number. You can't. That phone number

answers —

The Speaker: Premier, come to order, please. You can't correct someone else's record.

VOLUNTEER CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): My question is to

the Minister without Portfolio responsible for children.

Recently you visited my riding of Oshawa and met with a

large number of local organizations such as the Eastview

Boys' and Girls' Club, the YWCA, the Rose of Durham,

Kids on the Block, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, just to

name a few. I might add that I'm very thankful we have

representatives who are so knowledgeable on the issues of

children and how they affect our communities.

Minister, can you tell me how this meeting helped you

in your role as minister responsible for children?

Interjections.

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio

[children's issues]): I would hope the members of the

opposition would appreciate the work that is done by

volunteer organizations throughout this province.

During my meeting in Oshawa, which incidentally was

one of over 90 groups that I met with in that four-month

period, we did meet with the traditional organizations like

the YWCA, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Guides and the

Eastview Boys' and Girls' Club, but we also had the

opportunity of hearing from representatives of newer

organizations like the Rose of Durham, Kids on the Block

and Simcoe Hall.

This was a very valuable opportunity to find out first

hand and from these front-line volunteers what policies and

perspectives they have in terms of relating with children.

This actually helped me in the responsibility that I have to

advocate on behalf of children and be their voice at the

cabinet table.

Mr Ouellette: I agree, Minister, that there are a great

many volunteers who make up these organizations. I know

very well that they appreciated the opportunity to meet

with you.

One of the groups you met with was Kids on the Block.

This group sends volunteers from the program to local

schools with life-sized puppets —

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Like

the Tory caucus.

Mr Ouellette: — designed to assist children to

become aware of, understand, respect and cope with

differences in each other. The puppets tackle subjects such

ICE STORM

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. I was led to understand that he would be here throughout the day, the only day of the week that he would be available for question period.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management and Mines): I would request that you just stand the question down. The Premier had to step out for one minute.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Stand it down? Third party, member for Algoma.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I have a question to the minister —

The Speaker: Thank you. New question, leader of the official opposition.

Mr Christopherson: You haven't done anything —

generated — their children in these excellent programs that are

encourage more communities to pull together to support

those subject areas that have just been referred to. I

face tremendous difficulties in terms of understanding

important service to children in our schools today who

Kids on the Block, because they are rendering a very

Hon Mrs Marland: I congratulate organizations like you.

The Speaker: Member for Hamilton Centre, I'm not

warning you again. Come to order or I'm going to name

Mr Christopherson: You haven't done anything —

address, then I feel sorry for them. I congratulate organ-

izations like —

Hon Mrs Marland: If the opposition don't understand

what problems those children do face in school today in

terms of the subject areas that the Kids on the Block

address, then I feel sorry for them. I congratulate organ-

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Hon Mrs Marland: I'm sure the member for Hamilton

Centre doesn't intend to put down a group like Kids on the

Block. This is an excellent program that is running in this

province totally without a single dollar of government

money. They are helping children in the schools under-

stand problems that children in those schools are facing on

a daily basis.

Mr Christopherson: Queen Margaret: All rise.

Hon Mrs Marland: If the opposition don't understand

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terms of the subject areas that the Kids on the Block

address, then I feel sorry for them. I congratulate organ-

izations like —

Hon Mrs Marland: I'm sure the member for Hamilton

Centre doesn't intend to put down a group like Kids on the

Block. This is an excellent program that is running in this

province totally without a single dollar of government

money. They are helping children in the schools under-

stand problems that children in those schools are facing on

a daily basis.

Mr Christopherson: Queen Margaret: All rise.

Hon Mrs Marland: If the opposition don't understand

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money. They are helping children in the schools under

Mr McGuinty: To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: The ice storm that hit eastern Ontario this past winter was the worst natural disaster in the history of this country. The Premier made a great show, did all the photo ops, did everything that was necessary to make himself physically present at the time, but he assured the people of eastern Ontario that he would be there when the time came to deliver a cheque.

There are now over 22,000 claims for compensation. It's 30 degrees outside; the ice is long gone. Farms have experienced severe losses; businesses have experienced losses; homeowners have suffered property damage. What they're looking for is money. Why is it that when this damage was sustained in January, we find ourselves nearly in the month of July and no money is flowing?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I personally, in the days after the ice storm, delivered cheques to the municipalities so they could provide assistance to the individuals who needed it. Any individual who needed assistance during that ice storm received the funding they needed. Any emergency funding that was required was paid. Every municipality that was affected by the ice storm received funding.

The member is right: At the present time there are 22,000 applications for assistance to fix damage that requires long-term repair. That's tree planting — that's pretty tough to do in March; it can be done in July — and many things that require repairs where we were after the individuals involved to get their claims in as quickly as possible. We had a deadline of June 15. Thousands of those applications came in at the last minute and are being dealt with now as quickly as they possibly can.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell): On January 21, at a meeting in Smiths Falls attended by media and municipal reps, you made a statement that your government would not wait two or three months for compensation to the ice storm victims like the Manitoba government did during the last rain storm.

Five months later, nobody has received any compensation yet. The Cayer family of St-Albert, over \$80,000 loss; the Kaisan family, over \$75,000; the St François Senior Citizens' Home in Casselman, over \$72,000; the Villa St Luc in Curran, over \$12,000. Mrs Bernadette Larive of Limoges, whose eight-year-old son is on a special diet, has lost everything that she had in supplies. Mrs Campbell in Lévelaire had to sell her home because she could not afford to fix her home.

Minister, will we have —

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Hon Mr Leach: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I must say that I am extremely disappointed in that member who asked the question because he was there, he was present when we went down to eastern Ontario to help the people who were affected by that ice storm. He personally came while we delivered cheques to his community, and he has the audacity to stand up there and say we haven't compensated anybody. You should be ashamed of yourself.

We reacted faster than any government in history in getting assistance to people who needed assistance during that ice storm. Thousands, tens of thousands of people were provided with emergency assistance when they needed it. Certainly there are claims that are yet to be settled on severe damage that is yet to be repaired, but any individual who needed help during that ice storm received that help from this government, and that particular member knows it.

1530

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Bud Wildman (Algonia): I have a question to the Minister of Education and Training. Could the minister explain why he continues to blame the school boards across the province for the cuts to programs for students, for layoffs, and for the labour unrest facing the public education system as, under Bill 160, all collective agreements come due at the beginning of the fall term, when in fact it's the minister with his cutting formula, or so-called funding formula, which has forced the school boards into a position where they are unable to meet the needs of students in the province or their commitments to teachers and support staff?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): I am happy to rise and assure the member opposite, the critic for the NDP, that this government has introduced a funding formula, which will be implemented this fall, that will ensure more money goes into the classroom, more money goes towards programs, more money goes towards teachers, more money goes towards textbooks and computers for our kids, more money goes to all the programs within the classroom. The government has introduced that formula, which will be in effect. It's up to the school boards to take those moneys and put them to the most appropriate use within their classrooms in their schools.

I might also say that the school boards, of course, have the responsibility as well to negotiate with the teachers' unions and they're in the process of doing that.

Mr Wildman: How can the minister continue to state that there is more money under the funding formula going into the classroom when thousands of teachers, special education assistants, custodians, clerical staff and support workers are being laid off, despite the fact that they provide essential services to students? What's he going to do to resolve the labour relations crisis that is afflicting our public education system now because of the inadequacy of the funding formula and the fact that the boards have absolutely no flexibility under Bill 160 in order to collectively bargain with their staff? What is the minister going to do to resolve the impending labour crisis we face in September?

Hon David Johnson: Number one, not contribute to the hysteria that may come from the third party.

We need to allow the school boards the opportunity to negotiate with the teachers' unions. This government has provided more money in the classroom, more money for teachers. Each and every school board across Ontario will

This year we have 676 fire rangers, some of the most trained people in the world, to respond to those fire situations, an increase of 100 people over previous years — more than we had in 1993, more than we had in 1994 and more than we had in 1995. We have the best firefighters and more of them, and I know, like others in this chamber, I'm very proud of what they do.

This has been noted, I think, in the press, particularly in the Northern Daily News, an editorial this year, that said, "With 100 firefighters added to the normal complement and extra air transport available to move personnel and equipment, the MNR is doing everything possible to be ready." I agree with that.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr David Caplan (Orléans): My question is for the Minister of Education and Training. On January 19 you announced an overhaul of our apprenticeship system. It's now six months later and we have no new legislation; we have no announcement on tuition policy; we have no announcement on student assistance. That's not a surprise to the hundreds of thousands of college and university students who are waiting for this government to fulfill its promises on tuition and student assistance.

Minister, you will know that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus extensively consulted with young people across this province. They told us that they want access and opportunities in the trades. Your own consultation survey shows that fewer people will go into the apprenticeships if tuitions are charged. Will you commit today to this House that at a minimum you will reverse your position and commit that you will not be charging apprentices tuition fees?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): I'm not charging any tuition fees. I hope that by this time the member opposite knows that the Minister of Education and the Ministry of Education do not charge tuition fees. It's up to the colleges and universities what

This whole area has been made more difficult by the reductions in support from the federal government — I think it is some \$2.7 billion now — over a period of time. This is a general reduction in terms of support for education and health. Even in that light, this government has instituted the opportunity trust fund, over \$600 million now, to help our post-secondary students. We have required that if any post-secondary institution does put up its tuitions, it must set aside 30% of that to assist the students who are in need.

We have announced the Canada-Ontario millennium fund, some \$9 billion to assist our post-secondary institutions. Never has any government come forward with the kind of support that we have for our post-secondary students.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): On a point

have more classroom money, and within the classroom money, they have flexibility in terms of how they divvy up that sort of thing.

I think we need to allow the school boards to go through this process, to go through the negotiating process, and have the confidence that with more money invested in our classrooms, if boards are able to sit down and put the students first, we will have a better quality of education. There is no reason on earth why school boards can't come to a suitable contract with the teachers and have the teachers in the classroom this fall.

FOREST FIREFIGHTING

Mr Bill Grimmer (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. I wonder if you could provide the House with a summary of the forest fire situation in northern Ontario. As you know, in my riding of Muskoka-Georgian Bay there's a lot of valuable forest land, and on behalf of my constituents I'd like to know what the forest fire situation is throughout the province and particularly in northern Ontario.

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources): I want to thank the member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay for the question today. As I've previously reported to this House, obviously the weather conditions this year — the early spring, the dry conditions in much of the forests in Ontario — have caused us to have an extremely early deployment of the people and the resources that are dedicated to protecting Ontario's natural resources.

At this date there are 41 active fires burning in the province, and I'm happy to report that good suppression progress has been made on the project fires that concern us so much. We are expecting a little more rain and some thunderstorm activity in those areas of the province over the next 48 hours, and hopefully this will diminish the concern we might have about those 41 active fires.

So far this season there have been 853 fires in the province, virtually all of which were acted on in some way by the ministry, including using the new 415 water bombers that we purchased this year to help us protect those very valuable assets and also human life, particularly in the north.

Mr Grimmer: You mentioned the new water bombers, Minister. I wonder if you could provide us with a report on how the ministry has raised its ability to fight these fires, particularly in the area of manpower, and also in regard to the new water bombers.

Hon Mr Snobelen: I know the water bombers have received a lot of attention, particularly in northern Ontario. We have spent about \$200 million to acquire the most modern equipment available, new CL-415 water bombers, to help us suppress fires in the province, but I'm sure the member would agree with me that the most important asset in responding to fires is the courageous and dedicated people who put those fires out on the ground: our firefighters, our fire rangers in Ontario.

of order, Mr Speaker: Could I ask for unanimous consent to revert to motions?
The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is there unanimous consent to revert to motions? Agreed.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that the standing committee on regulations and private bills be authorized to meet on Thursday, June 25, 1998, from 10 am to 12 pm for the purpose of considering Bill Pt19, An Act respecting the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.
The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

PETITIONS

CHARITABLE GAMING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:
 "We, the residents of Gloucester and the surrounding area, wish to express our firm opposition to the establishment of a gambling casino in this residential community, in close proximity to two local high schools. We wish to communicate to the Legislature the widespread opposition which this has generated in the community.
 "We also wish to communicate our disappointment in the total lack of democratic consultation on the part of our local city council. Decisions were made and voted on prior to any meaningful public input. We are also hereby expressing our concern for those families who will be hurt through gambling addiction, with the resulting problems of suicide, divorce, family violence and impoverishment.
 "We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose the establishment of a charity casino in Gloucester, Ontario."

There are hundreds of names on this petition. I affix my name as I'm in agreement with its contents.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I have a petition signed by about 1,200 people from the London area. It reads as follows:
 "To the Honourable Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:
 "We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, beg leave to petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:
 "Whereas the Honourable Janet Ecker, has announced that she will sell the services and programs at Ontario's secure

custody facilities for high-risk young offenders to the private sector; and
 "Whereas this decision will move these important services away from the government's responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the public, the young people in their charge and the workers who supervise and provide treatment to young offenders; and
 "Whereas we believe strongly that elected officials should be directly accountable and responsible for all children and adults who are in custody as ordered by the courts of Ontario and that no private company should profit from crime;
 "We urge the minister to keep our secure and treatment facilities for young offenders professional and public."
 I agree with this and am proud to sign this petition.

ABORTION

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): I have a petition from the Hanover Knights of Columbus and Harriet McCracken from the CWL. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.
 "Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded over 45,000 abortions in 1993 at an estimated cost of \$25 million; and
 "Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury, or illness, and abortions are not therapeutic procedures; and
 "Whereas the vast majority of abortions are done for reasons of convenience or finance; and
 "Whereas the province has the exclusive authority to determine what services will be insured; and
 "Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require funding for elective procedures; and
 "Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is in fact hazardous to women's health;
 "Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cease from providing any taxpayers' dollars for the performance of abortions."

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): People in northwestern Ontario — Thunder Bay — are very concerned about the mental health care crisis in Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario. I have a petition that continues to come in; hundreds of names are coming in.
 "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:
 "Whereas proper mental health care is essential to all Ontarians; and
 "Whereas mental health care is severely underfunded in northwestern Ontario; and
 "Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has called for the closure of the Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital with no replacement services in its place; and
 "Whereas appropriate community mental health treatment is so lacking in northwestern Ontario that those who need treatment, support and rehabilitation are incarcerated in district jails; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has not delivered on its commitment to set up the Northwestern Ontario Mental Health Agency over one year after it promised to do so; and

"Whereas there is a dramatic shortage of psychiatrists in northwestern Ontario, to the point where the doctors are severely overworked; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Health promised a 12-bed adolescent treatment centre and has failed to deliver on that promise;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to commit those funds necessary to provide full and proper mental health care to those in need in northwestern Ontario and call on the Minister of Health to cancel the closure of the Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital."

It's signed by hundreds of constituents who are very concerned. I'm happy to sign it.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): "Whereas nurses in Ontario often experience coercion to participate in practices which directly contravene their deeply held ethical standards; and

"Whereas pharmacists in Ontario are often pressured to dispense and/or sell chemicals and/or devices contrary to their moral or religious beliefs; and

"Whereas public health workers in Ontario are expected to assist in providing controversial services and promoting controversial materials against their consciences; and

"Whereas physicians in Ontario often experience pressure to give referrals for medications, treatments and/or procedures which they believe to be gravely immoral; and

"Whereas competent health care workers and students in various health care disciplines in Ontario have been denied training, employment, continued employment and advancement in their intended fields and suffered other forms of unjust discrimination because of the dictates of their consciences; and

"Whereas the health care workers experiencing such unjust discrimination have at present no practical and accessible legal means to protect themselves;

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

NURSES' BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas nursing is key to quality health care; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to provide high-quality care; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to be heard and consulted on health care issues; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to be recognized and treated as equals in the health care system; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to have meaningful participation in all aspects of health care reform; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to be advocates for their communities and the people they care for without fear of reprisal; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to work in settings that are free from harassment and discrimination and that nurture learning, diversity, personal growth, job satisfaction and mutual support; and

"Whereas nurses want the right work in conditions that promote and foster professionalism and teamwork; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to deliver care in an integrated, publicly funded, not-for-profit health care system that is grounded in the principles of the Canada Health Act;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour, promote and respect the nurses' bill of rights as outlined above and to ensure that these rights are enshrined in all aspects of health care."

I'm pleased to sign my name to that petition.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have petitions forwarded to me by Margaret Purcell and Mike Izzotti from the Coalition for Conscience. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas nurses in Ontario often experience coercion to participate in practices which directly contravene their deeply held ethical standards; and

"Whereas pharmacists in Ontario are often pressured to dispense and/or sell chemicals and/or devices contrary to their moral or religious beliefs; and

"Whereas public health workers in Ontario are expected to assist in providing controversial services and promoting controversial materials against their consciences; and

"Whereas physicians in Ontario often experience pressure to give referrals for medications, treatments and/or procedures which they believe to be gravely immoral; and

"Whereas competent health care workers and students in various health care disciplines in Ontario have been denied training, employment, continued employment and advancement in their intended fields and suffered other forms of unjust discrimination because of the dictates of their consciences; and

"Whereas the health care workers experiencing such unjust discrimination have at present no practical and accessible legal means to protect themselves;

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of

consciousness of health care workers, prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

1550

ABORTION

Mr Bob Wood (London South): I have a petition signed by 216 people:

"Whereas the Ontario health system is overburdened and unnecessary spending must be cut; and
 "Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury or illness and abortions are not therapeutic procedures; and
 "Whereas the vast majority of abortions are done for reasons of convenience or finance; and
 "Whereas the province has exclusive authority to determine what services will be insured; and
 "Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require funding for elective procedures; and
 "Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is in fact hazardous to women's health; and
 "Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded over 45,000 abortions in 1993 at an estimated cost of \$25 million;
 "Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cease from providing any taxpayers' dollars for the performance of abortions."

LINHAVEN HOME FOR THE AGED

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): The petition is to the government of Ontario.

"Whereas Linhaven Home for the Aged has provided excellent service to seniors in St Catharines for many years;

"Whereas the staff and volunteers at Linhaven have endeavoured to enhance the quality of life of residents of the home through their kind and compassionate care;
 "Whereas cuts in funding to Linhaven will result in a reduction of staff and resources available to meet the needs of seniors who reside in the home;

"Whereas the discharging of acute care patients from active treatment hospitals results in medical staff at homes for the aged being required to provide more extensive and intensive care to patients who are discharged from hospitals;

"Whereas Linhaven and other homes for the aged have among the residents more individuals afflicted with Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and other medical conditions which require an appropriate complement of staff and necessary equipment to meet their medical needs;

"Be it resolved that the government of Ontario increase funding to Linhaven Home for the Aged in St Catharines so that the medical requirements of Linhaven residents may be properly addressed and seniors may live in dignity in our community."

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has passed Bill C-68, An Act Respecting Firearms and Other Weapons; and
 "Whereas" — there are a number of conditions in this petition.

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to repeal from Bill C-68 those provisions for a compulsory registration of all firearms."
 I present it on behalf of my constituency and apply my signature as well.

CHARITABLE GAMING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition from people opposed to casinos. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is trying to impose so-called charity casinos on 44 communities across Ontario as a vehicle to make profits from gambling for government coffers; and
 "Whereas these gambling halls will bleed from the communities on which they are imposed the discretionary dollars which might otherwise be spent on goods and services; and
 "Whereas the Harris government is attempting to bribe cash-strapped municipalities to accept the new gambling halls by promising to pay so-called administration fees to operate slot machines in the casinos; and
 "Whereas the Harris government is attempting to coerce municipalities into accepting the new 24-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week gambling halls by suggesting that charities may not receive funding;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the Mike Harris government to halt the imposition of new gambling halls, so-called charity casinos, on communities across Ontario."
 I affix my signature as I'm in full agreement with this petition.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition forwarded to me by Wayne Samuelson, president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, on behalf of the 600,000 members of the OFL.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:
 "Whereas each year in Ontario approximately 300 workers are killed on the job, several thousand die of occupational diseases and 400,000 suffer work-related injuries and illnesses; and

"Whereas during the past decade the Workers' Health and Safety Centre proved to be the most cost-effective WCB-funded prevention organization dedicated to worker health and safety concerns; and

"Whereas the WCB provides over 80% of its legislated prevention funding to several employer-controlled safety associations and less than 20% to the Workers' Health and Safety Centre; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre recently lost several million dollars in funding and course revenue due to government changes to legislated training requirements; and

"Whereas 30% of Workers' Health and Safety Centre staff were laid off due to these lost training funds; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre now faces an additional 25% cut to its 1998 budget, which will be used to augment new funding for employer safety associations in the health, education and services sector;

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre's funding to at least 50% of the WCB's legislated prevention funding; and

"Further we, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the WCB to significantly increase its legislated prevention funding in order to eliminate workplace illness, injury and death."

I can tell you that the workers' centre has been advised that cuts are taking place.

CHIROPRACTIC HEALTH CARE

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I submit petitions in support of chiropractic services signed by people from Jarvis, Hagersville, Fisherville and points east. In the interest of time, I'll just read the concluding summary:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize the contribution made by chiropractors to the good health of the people of Ontario, to recognize the taxpayer dollars saved by the use of low-cost preventive care such as that provided by chiropractors and to recognize that to restrict funding for chiropractic health care only serves to limit access to a needed health care service."

I sign this petition.

NURSES' BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas nursing is key to quality health care; and

"Whereas nurses want the right to provide high-quality care; and

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that,

pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order of the House relating to Bill 35, An Act to create jobs and protect consumers by promoting low-cost energy through competition, to protect the environment, to provide for pensions and to make related amendments to certain Acts, when Bill 35 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment; and at such time, the bill shall be referred to the standing committee on resources development;

That the standing committee on resources development shall be authorized to meet for eight days during the summer recess for the purpose of conducting public hearings;

That, pursuant to standing order 74(d), the Chair of the standing committee on resources development shall establish the deadline for the tabling of amendments or for filing them with the clerk of the committee;

That the committee shall be authorized to meet for four days at its regularly scheduled meeting times for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill beginning at its first regularly scheduled meeting time following the said recess;

That the committee be authorized to meet for a fifth day of clause-by-clause consideration from 9 am to 12 pm and

following routine proceedings until completion of clause-by-clause consideration.

1600

At 4:30 pm on the fifth day of clause-by-clause consideration, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto;

That any divisions required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a);

That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than the first sessional day that reports from committees may be received following completion of clause-by-clause consideration. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on the date provided, the bill shall be deemed to have been passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House;

That upon receiving the report of the standing committee on resources development, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

That one sessional day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill. At 5:55 pm or 9:25 pm, as the case may be, on such day, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment;

That the vote on third reading of the bill may, at the request of any chief whip of a recognized party in the House, be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding "deferred votes"; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceeding on the bill, the division bells shall be limited to five minutes.

Mr Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Huron and the member for Peterborough, but prior to turning over that time to those members, I would like to indicate that it's unfortunate that time allocation was necessary with regard to this bill, because I believe that in general the parties in the House are somewhat supportive of this legislation, recognizing that the restructuring of the electricity sector is a necessary matter.

I think it should be known that we offered to pass this on second reading, to have whatever committee — we were quite willing to negotiate committee hearings and were quite flexible on whatever those hearings might be etc. It is unfortunate that the government is once again pushed to this particular time closure motion, but this cuts two ways. Unfortunately, what it will do is create a precedent, as it has in the federal House, for being the norm with regard to legislation that's carried through.

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): No pun intended. I just say that I hope in the future there will be some possibility of negotiating fairly substantial bills where

there isn't a lot of dispute over the principle of it, but I can understand that being the case. However, that's where we are.

With that, I'd like to say one other thing with regard to the environmental parts of this bill. I have not had the opportunity to talk about the environmental sections in this bill.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): There aren't any. Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): We will give you the 30 seconds to do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Order. Hon Mr Sterling: If one looks at this bill with regard to the environmental conditions required to sell electricity in Ontario, one will find that the Ontario Energy Board will be requiring of any generator that it live to certain standards. That kind of precondition is not contained in any other legislation that I'm aware of North America, save one, and that is in the state of Massachusetts, where before you get the opportunity to sell in, you must meet some environmental criteria.

How those environmental criteria will be set will be very interesting, but it was important for the generators in our province to have that section in, not only for their concern over the environment with regard to what a foreign generator might do in terms of creating air quality problems which will eventually drift over on to us, but also to create a level playing field with regard to generators both inside the borders of Ontario and outside the borders of Ontario.

Another very interesting part of the legislation with regard to environmental requirements is the whole notion of disclosure. We will see, as competition enters into this field, that there will be many different companies offering electricity and ancillary services. What we require in this legislation is that there be a disclosure of the environmental record of that particular company to the customer so that the customer can understand what the environmental record of that company is.

We are also introducing the notion of sector emission caps. This is very important in setting up the framework for emission trading to take place. A lot of people have talked about emission trading. That is very important in terms of keeping our sectors very competitive in this field and ensuring that we get the best bang for our bucks, in terms of the expenditures we make to reduce the emissions, to make certain that they occur in the places where you can get the greatest environmental effect. The legislation also sets up the framework for the possibility of the government setting forward an emission trading system.

So you have the ticket-to-play concept in this legislation in terms of environmental concerns, you have the emission caps and trading system, and you have the disclosure. There is no jurisdiction in North America which contains those three elements for environmental protection. I'm very hopeful that we'll be able not only to be concerned with what happens in Ontario but to force neighbouring states like Ohio, Illinois and Indiana, which have a great effect on our air quality in Ontario — encourage them to meet environmental standards which

they are not meeting at the present time. We suffer as a result of the fact that a lot of the plants in Ohio, the coal-fired generating stations, are emitting very serious air quality problems, and those air quality problems carry over to Ontario.

It's interesting to know that the poorest air in the province of Ontario is in a small community of only 1,000 people. People might say that in the city of Toronto we live in a big urban society and therefore we have the worst air in the province of Ontario. It's a small community called Long Point, and it's right on the northern shore of Lake Erie. The reason they have the poorest air quality in the province of Ontario is not because the local people are driving bad cars or there's a factory down the street that's emitting anything. It's because of the air that is coming from the Ohio Valley, across Lake Ontario and is dumping on them.

That is the most patent example of the problem we face in this province with regard to air quality that we have to have some influence outside. This legislation gives us some glimmer of hope that we can have some control over generating stations in Ohio and Illinois, because if they don't meet the standards they can't sell here. I believe this will be encouragement for them to clean up some of their plants which have been grandfathered in the United States by their legislation, where they don't have to live to current standards, and we will have better air here as a result.

I'm sorry to cut into my colleagues' debating time. The member for Huron, who was my parliamentary assistant when I was the Minister of Energy, has been extremely active in this whole restructuring, along with Minister Wilson. I'm looking forward to hearing her remarks.

What I suggest, Mr Speaker, is that because I had not had the opportunity to speak before, the remaining time left between now and 6 o'clock be divided equally among the parties. Is that what —

Mr Bud Williams (Algoma): Agreed.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): Do you want us to agree, Norm, or are you just playing a trick?

Hon Mr Sterling: I never play tricks. I'm asking if the other parties want to split the time.

Mr Bradley: Only if the NDP doesn't attack us.

Hon Mr Sterling: Okay. So, Mr Speaker, there are about 110 minutes which would be divided equally.

The Acting Speaker: Is it agreed? Agreed.

1610

Mrs Helen Johns (Huron): As the Minister of the Environment said earlier, I'm going to be sharing my time with the member for Peterborough.

I want to say first off that this time allocation motion is not how I would have liked to have seen the legislation go forward. There has been a great deal of consultation between the Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology and its stakeholders, and it is unfortunate that we can't move out to committee and start to talk to the people. I am saddened by this.

We have offered eight days of committee and five days of clause-by-clause, and because this bill is very

and hear from the people who have comments and want to talk to us.

This bill is in some ways a very important bill in this House, I think to all three parties, because it breaks up a Hydro monopoly that has been in existence for 92 years. What we have had in the past is Ontario Hydro, which has had a monopoly service, and we have had municipal electric utilities that have had quasi-monopoly services. This breaks that up and says we need to look at different ways to bring electricity and gas to Ontario.

We're trying in this bill, and I think we've succeeded, to ensure that we have safe, reliable energy. That's really what the focus was and why we started with this bill. When many of us from this House were on the select committee, we recognized that although Hydro had done a good job in the early stages of moving us into the electricity age, there was more that could be done with hydro and gas and there were more regulations that were needed, more consumer protection needed.

So we came forward with another bill. This of course was outlined in the Common Sense Revolution, so this isn't a new concept that we thought up in the last week or two. This is a concept we have been thinking about for three years. I guess this weekend it's three years that the Conservatives have held power and it was a year before that that the Common Sense Revolution came out, so it's four years that we have been talking about this process and working on it. I've been lucky enough to work with both the Minister of the Environment, Norm Sterling, and the Minister of Energy, Jim Wilson, on this bill, and they've been thinking about this and working it and consulting with people for all of those three years.

What we need to do in this province is to ensure that we get the best cost for power for the consumers. Right now the average household in Ontario pays about \$1,000 in electricity bills a year. They have gas on top of that — at least in our family we do — and we have other costs, but that's a very high cost to negotiate when you have a young family like I do, and you have to be concerned about that. We believe that the best way to keep the cost of electricity low in this province is to introduce competition into the system. We've seen that work with gas. I've seen in my telephone bills, now that I'm on with 10-cents-a-minute thing that Bell has, that my phone bills are coming down also. So we have seen some successes with bringing competition into the system.

We also need to create jobs and stimulate investment in this province. This isn't our only concern, there is no question, but when we look at other jurisdictions which have gone through this kind of change, we have seen 80,000 to 100,000 new jobs being created in those jurisdictions where that happens.

In the Common Sense Revolution the Premier promised that we would create 725,000 private sector jobs, and this will go a long way to help the creation of those jobs in the

better by having further discussion, second reading and then going out to talk to the individuals and the stakeholders in the province who have a lot to say about this bill.

One of the things I should say is that there has been a lot of consultation on this bill. I think all of us in the House recognize that there has been great stakeholder approval. I don't think ever in our history have we seen so many people come together in the energy portion and say, "Yes, we think this is the right way to go."

We have had the help, I would say, of Ontario Hydro, both at the management level and at the staff level. I would like to say to the people across the province who work for Ontario Hydro that it certainly is a difficult time as the corporation goes through change, but I think they recognize, as we do in the House, that to maintain a viable workforce at Ontario Hydro, some change has to happen.

1620

In the past couple of years, the nuclear facilities have not been working to maximum capacity. I read an article this morning in the Financial Post that said we have the capacity to produce about 14,000 megawatts of power in the province. Right now we're reduced by 5,000 megawatts because we are not working at capacity.

When we're reduced by that kind of wattage, that means jobs. The people at Ontario Hydro need to have more security with their jobs. I'm pleased that they have been part of the process, along with their unions and their associations. They've come to the table and they've said: "We're happy to work with the government because we need to have change at Ontario Hydro. It needs to be a viable business so that we can all prosper and do well."

To them today I want to say thank you for their cooperation, thank you for working with us to go through this change, thank you for bringing us safe, reliable power. It's certainly the intention of the government to work with those employees to make sure that Hydro continues as a viable entity.

We talked to those people. We also talked to a number of different stakeholders and brought them together to talk about the changes that needed to happen in Hydro. In fact, we formed two committees. We formed the Market Design Committee, headed by Ron Daniels, who is a professor at the University of Toronto. We have 10 to 15 different stakeholders coming together there, sharing how they think the market should go in the future and working towards a system that brings us safe, reliable and cost-effective power. That's been happening and I'm pleased by that.

I'm also pleased by the Minister's Electricity Transition Committee, as we work to go through this process up until 2000 when competition is introduced. What is important is that we're able to react quickly to any of the transitional issues that might happen and we're able to ensure that the system is working so that it produces that safe, reliable power, so that it produces jobs in Ontario, so that it's cost-effective. That transition committee is going to help us with all of those things and we look forward to those discussions as we move forward.

province of Ontario. We're very optimistic and we need this to move forward.

It also enhances consumer protection. When many of us sat in the select committee, we heard many times that the Atomic Energy Control Board or the Ontario Energy Board would give some recommendations to people in the industry and they could take them or they couldn't take them; they did some of the things that were recommended and they didn't do others. It's time to give the Ontario Energy Board some teeth. It's time to give the Ontario Energy Board some power. That's what we're trying to do in this bill. We're trying to increase the protection for consumers and increase the safety and the reliability of power in Ontario.

Another thing that really affects my riding — that's the beautiful riding of Huron county, which is north of London, for those of you who don't know — is that it also relates and lets people know about the government's commitment to rural and remote assistance. What's happening in that particular case is that in the past we've had 600,000 residential customers and 100,000 people with farms getting a rate that's fair and equitable so they too can have power. This confirms the government's desire to maintain that.

As much as we have heard differently from the opposition members, it also gives us a chance to be forerunners in environmental areas. In the past, we have had America going into emissions trading credits. We've had other areas looking at how they can better protect their environment. As a mother of young children, I believe that's very important. We have to protect the environment.

This bill gives us the opportunities to start to look at how we can better utilize clean power. Of course, clean power comes from a number of sources. There's green energy, which is our windmills and solar power. Also, nuclear power, in its form as it's producing, gives us clean power. What we have to consider very carefully when we talk about nuclear power is what we do with the waste at the end. That's a concern we have to deal with.

I look forward to looking at the environmental issues to try to decide how we can best leave our province in the best shape for our young people, for my children coming forward and for the children of all the viewers and people at home.

Mr Wildman: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

The Acting Speaker: Would you please check if we have a quorum.

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Huron.

Mrs Johns: I think this bill offers some very good opportunities for us in this House to review the energy segment of legislation. It's unfortunate that we're going to time allocation today. I think we really could have done

Minister Wilson brought all these people together and

has been talking to them throughout the whole year and a half that he's been at the Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology. I think we need to (a) recognize the work

he's done, and (b) feel comfortable at home that a number of people are working to ensure that Ontario Hydro maintains viability and that we have good power in the

province.

Another group that's been involved in this is our local

MEUs. We all have faith that the municipal electric utilities are working for us in our communities and doing the best they can to bring power from the generating

station through to our homes.

I think the most important thing here is that we all

know that when we go to the light switch, the light's going

to come on and we're going to have electricity in our homes. We needed to ensure that they were on side. They

have some issues, and we're going to work with them through the process with the committee that we're going to

part of August, to ensure that we try to address their

concerns. So we're working with that.

One of the things I talked about earlier, which I think is

really important to focus back on, is the issue of consumer

protection. I want people to be cognizant that we needed

things to change. We needed the Ontario Energy Board to

have more teeth and we needed that for a couple of

reasons.

In the past, gas companies have gone through a

deregulation, and we've had some complaints about the

market in that particular case. There have been great

market makers out there and there have been some who have

not been up to snuff. That happened not only since 1995, it

happened all throughout the 1990s and I believe the late

1980s. What we need to do is to ensure that those people

are licensed, that we have confidence in their financial

abilities, that we have confidence in the way they're

training their staff, that we have confidence in them as

people who sell energy and electricity and gas to us and

the people of Ontario.

We look forward to the Ontario Energy Board's role in

this. I look forward to having the former member for

Nickel Belt, Floyd Laughren, come to committee and talk

about his role with the Ontario Energy Board and where

he sees his role as being. I think that will give everyone in

Ontario confidence that we're going to truly have a board

that protects consumers. I think we can only get that kind

of confidence by getting out to committee and talking to

people like Mr. Laughren.

The stakeholders have been saying that they're

confident, that this is the right move, that we have to move

in this direction, we have to introduce competition if we're

ever going to move towards better pricing, if we're ever

going to move to a marketplace where we're ensured a

supply, because if we keep going at the same decreasing

megawatts, we're going to have trouble in the future. So

we need to be very creative in how we move forward.

There have been a couple of news articles which I think

bear a little bit of discussion, and the first one revolves

around the rates. Everyone's got an opinion about where

the rates are going. People are saying the costs are going up; people are saying they're going down. We've looked at other jurisdictions and we believe that if competition comes forward and we set up the stranded debt correctly, there's an opportunity for people to see rate reduction throughout the province. But we have to work very hard to ensure that happens. We need to get out there and talk to people about how stranded debt has worked in other countries, in other jurisdictions. We need to ensure that we get this right, and again we need to get out to committee and talk to some of the experts in this industry so that we can add to the knowledge we have and hear what people have to say.

The NDP is talking that this is our move to privatize Ontario Hydro. Believe me, if it was our move to privatize Ontario Hydro, we probably would have done that in the past. But the corporation is so undervalued that we would be fire-selling an asset that's an integral asset to Ontario. We need to make this asset something we're proud of, as we were in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. We need to work towards strengthening this asset because we have incredible amounts of power — hydro-electric, nuclear and fossil fuel — and we need to restore the generation part of the business to its former self. It is not our intention to privatize, and in fact in the legislation you won't see the word "privatize."

What I think has happened in this particular area is the union and the people in Bruce, which is very close to me, and some of the people who actually live in my riding, are concerned about Bruce A being down at this particular point. They suggested that we should look at public-private partnerships to get Bruce up quicker. Since many of my people are affected in my riding with respect to this, I believe we should look at some creative ways to bring Bruce A back up, because people deserve to have jobs in Bruce. I would like to do that as quickly as we can. But this is not a fire sale. We have no offers at all on Bruce A at this particular point. We're looking to restore Ontario Hydro, not to pull it apart. From that standpoint, when my colleague from across the way says this is the big step to privatization, it is just truly not correct. It is just not correct.

The big issue that we're all going to be looking at over the next few months is stranded debt — how many assets we have, where we're going to allocate those within Ontario Hydro, whether to the generation side or the distribution side — and we're going to be looking at how we can put liability against that to keep Ontario Hydro viable, but at the same time to start to pay back the debt that unfortunately we have all guaranteed. There's no getting around that debt. We all signed that, because the province of Ontario was the guarantor on all the debt that's associated with Ontario Hydro.

Their argument is that somehow there's going to be new debt and that's going to jack the price of electricity up in the province. I'd like the viewers at home to know that even though there is debt, and there will be debt that we have to pay off, we're paying that off now. It's in the price of our power as we speak. Ontario Hydro has paid \$600 million this year off the debt charges of the province, and

they have said that they intend to do that over the next three years. They have done that, and we do not believe that is going to increase the price of power or that consumers are going to see any hardship with respect to that.

1630

But I agree that all of us in this House have to work together to ensure that we get this company balanced so that it can compete in the marketplace and the price of power is reasonable. There's no question that's the dilemma we're all going to work on.

I'd like to say that this legislation is enabling, and as you move through the process today you're going to hear, "You didn't say you were actually going to do that, or that you were going to do it when." What this bill does is allow us to put together the fundamentals. We have committees and groups and members from the opposition working with us, hopefully, to ensure that we get this right. Yes, it is enabling legislation, and we believe that's the way to go so that as we move through the process, because we've never done this before in Ontario, we have the tools to make Ontario Hydro a viable company and to make sure that when people in Ontario turn on the light switch there's a safe, reliable power there for all of us to use and for all of us to grow with in our communities.

I look forward to the committee. As I said before, I also look forward to people who have an interest in this writing to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology. I look forward to people coming to committee, calling us and talking to us within our ministry, within the minister's office and my office. I look forward to valuable input from the stakeholders and opposition members as we go through the process.

I certainly hope we can work together on this bill. I think it's important for the future of Ontario and it's especially important for the future of our children. I look forward to this cohesive way of working through this process to make sure that energy is where it should be in Ontario.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): It is indeed a pleasure for me today to speak to Bill 35, An Act to create jobs and protect consumers by promoting low-cost energy through competition, to protect the environment, to provide for pensions and to make related amendments to certain Acts. I believe the title of this bill is most explicit and truly explains the contents of the bill. This bill promises to ensure a reliable, affordable and safe supply of electricity for the residents of this province, as well as increased opportunities for investment and job creation for Ontarians.

The short name, the Energy Competition Act, I believe gain is very explicit. I want to emphasize the words "energy competition." Competition as seen in the business community is very positive to what can happen regarding keeping the prices of commodities lower. It keeps everybody honest. Without competition, I suggest that prices keep increasing, which is exactly what has happened in this province over the last many years. It is long overdue that competition is introduced in energy or in Ontario Hydro in this province.

Under schedule A, as you know, the Electricity Act, 1998, replaces the Power Corporation Act. Under schedule B, the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, amends the present act and the natural gas act. One that I think is very important to certain members of society and certain Ontarians is schedule C, which amends the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System Act and creates a new category of employees who are eligible to participate in OMERS. Many of us who were in the municipal field know how good a retirement plan OMERS is. This act will give the opportunity to a number of Ontarians to be part of that retirement system.

This legislation would reorganize Ontario Hydro into two commercial corporations, the Ontario Electricity Generation Corp and the Ontario Electric Services Corp, and in addition will set up a new non-profit crown corporation, known as the Independent Electricity Market Operator, that covers the provincial supply for Ontario, controlled by 10 to 20 appointed board members.

I believe this type of new structure will create competition within the system. What was once a huge monopoly with virtually no accountability to the people of this province will no longer exist. When you look at the growing world population, and it is suggested that it will probably double in the next half-century or so, indeed there will be a great increase in the demand for electricity, not only in this province but around the world.

The proposed legislation would allow the electricity generation business to be open to power producers, but only those producers who meet the provincial environmental standards and who also qualify for a licence. I believe that part of the bill is one of the most important. I want to emphasize the word "only." Only those producers who meet the provincial environmental standards qualify to receive a licence. Our government, as in many other bills that we have done, will not jeopardize the environment.

There are in this bill proposed amendments to the Ontario Energy Board Act which would provide continuing rate protection for rural and remote electricity consumers, something that has been long-standing in Ontario, type of protection due to the continuing change and fluctuation of their products. Northern Ontario residents or those in remote areas having rate protection is again no exception. I believe that is a most important part of this bill.

It also ensures that distribution companies fulfil their obligation to connect and serve their customers. Customer service is something very unique, now that we have finally introduced it in a number of bills, in a number of ministries, since our government took over. What we are looking at is that when monopolies prevail — and this is not only in government, but in business, whatever it might be — customer service slips drastically and deteriorates. The funny part of it is that the people who are paying are the ones who are getting the short end of the stick.

The Ontario Energy Board would license companies participating in the new electric market, and all marketers selling electricity or natural gas to residential consumers

In the United States, the United States Energy Information Administration estimated that the introduction of competition in the electricity sector would result in reductions between 8% and 15%. You know, Mr Speaker, and I know that when competition is introduced into any market, prices go down and customer service comes up.

The Ontario Electricity Generation Corp would take ownership of Ontario Hydro's generation assets and be responsible for generating and selling electricity. It would be owned by the province. It would be financed by the province. It would be flexible in making operating and investment decisions. It would be open to power producers who meet environmental standards and receive a licence to generate electricity. The transmission grid and wires of the province's local distribution systems would become common carriers, allowing power companies to market and sell electricity to customers. Again, the key in any business is to market the product you are trying to sell.

The Ontario Electric Services Corp would be the holding company for the transmission, distribution and retail services side of the electric business. The great empire of Ontario Hydro will be reduced to become a productive, accountable, efficient and effective business in Ontario, responsible to conduct business in a businesslike fashion. I emphasize that: conducting business in a businesslike fashion.

As mentioned, we are looking at standards. They are looking at licensing, and presently there is not mandatory licensing of energy marketers in Ontario. That is unbelievable. There will be. If this bill is passed, it will move Ontario from a monopoly-based market to a competitive wholesale and retail electricity market some time in the year 2000. This would give customers greater choice and help produce a competitive market for the industry which will create jobs.

The future of the electricity industry will change, but this change will not short-circuit Ontarians in any way. The business of energy will change; it will change, it will power-surge us into the future in a productive manner.

I am extremely proud finally to be able to support a bill that is long overdue, Bill 35.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Kenilworth North): I want to indicate at the outset that I will be dividing my time with at least Mr Phillips and perhaps Mr Bradley, if he returns from the onerous responsibility that is attached to House leadership.

Let me say at the outset that I am very disappointed that we have the time allocation motion we're currently debating. I had hoped, I think like other members, that we would be able to negotiate an arrangement but that apparently did not happen. I was not privy to any of those negotiations. I am personally prepared to see the debate on second reading conclude in a timely fashion. My concern, quite frankly, is with the mandate here for but eight days of hearings this summer. I think that is potentially a very serious problem.

I can't imagine a bill more serious in its implications for the economic and social wellbeing than Bill 35. I have to imagine that once people across the province have had

will require a licence. Probably one of the most important aspects of this bill will ensure that the standards and regulations within the industry are met. I suggest again to you that the public, the people of this province, will be protected.

If approved, the proposed Energy Competition Act would ensure strong environmental protection measures are built into the electricity market. This would maintain existing limits on emissions, maintain and enforce standards for environmental protection, and meet national and international commitments. We will not allow greater competition to threaten environmental protection, and again, standards and regulations must be and will be protected in this industry.

1640

As has been mentioned, the legislation closely follows the direction of the white paper, which was called *Direction for Change: Charting a Course for Competitive Electricity and Jobs in Ontario*. I would like to suggest that that white paper was created after consultation with the people of Ontario, input from the MEUs. Certainly in my own riding I met with them very regularly to make sure I knew what their concerns were and what their wishes were, and was able to pass them on to the ministry. They also met with the business community, in both the public and the private sector, but most importantly they met and received consultation and direction from the ordinary Ontarian, which is what this is all about.

The Ontario Energy Board report, advising on the needed legislative change, assisted with the natural gas portion of this bill. Needed legislation: It's been said and it's been talked about for many years. We, as ordinary Ontarians, knew there was needed change in Ontario Hydro. As I have said, there has been a great deal of consultation on this bill.

As the minister recently said, "This will allow access to Ontario's transmission grid, will open up investment opportunities for new generators, cogenerators and renewable forms of energy production." This is one of the ones suggested, that capital spending on generation capacity to serve new demands, to replace older equipment, could amount to \$8 billion to \$10 billion. That's job creation in its best form.

Electricity prices are currently set according to provisions in the Power Corporation Act which require that the price be determined on the basis of cost. Hydro's average wholesale price for electricity has been frozen until the end of the year 2000 in order to provide cost relief to customers. Let me emphasize the fact that this was in our government's Common Sense Revolution. It's another indication that we made a promise and we have kept that promise to the people of this province.

In the past 10 years the cost of electricity in Ontario has helped erode the previous advantage Ontario had as an attractive place to live and invest. Electricity costs rose by over 30% in the early 1990s. It's unfortunate that there are not more members of the previous government sitting here to remember that during their term of office Ontario Hydro rose some 30%.

an opportunity to read and digest the bill and all of the regulatory possibilities the bill contains, there will be a very real interest in people coming to the committee, not just here in Toronto but I would expect in Thunder Bay, in London, in Ottawa, in Kingston. It may not be the case, but I have to say as a legislator and as a citizen of this province that I find it very troubling that we would get a bill of such complexity and such import introduced in mid-June for debate on second reading in late June, sent out to a committee a couple of weeks later in the middle of summer, and basically reported back to the House potentially by Labour Day weekend, perhaps by Thanksgiving weekend.

That is, in my view, a shoddy way to do business. All of us talk about accountability; I'll tell you, I suspect there will be people out in north Perth or in south Renfrew who will just be tuning in to this debate some weeks from now, only to find out that the bill has long passed through the various stages of parliamentary consideration. I'm deeply troubled by that, and for that reason alone I will be voting in the negative on the motion standing in the name of Mr. Sterling, the government House leader. I had hoped, and still do, that we could have negotiated some kind of more reasonable approach, particularly around the committee stage.

1650

I must say it's been a process and an attitude around here in recent years, where you take the really complicated stuff and you drop it right on the edge of the recess, usually the summer recess, and then in the peak of the summer tourist season you put some ads in the Jawbone Tribune and say, "Come out and talk to us tonight at 7 o'clock in the Thorlow township hall," and most of Thorlow township is of course properly on holidays in the last week of July.

Interjection.

Mr Conway: I just simply say, we wonder why our currency is as low as it is. I'm telling you that we will not, probably in this Parliament and maybe in this decade, pass a bill with more significance economic and social ramifications than this Bill 35.

Interjection.

Mr Conway: Pardon me?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Order. **Mr Conway:** It has nothing to do with the dollar. It is giving people a chance to understand and speak to an enormously important and very complex piece of legislation. That's just my view. If other people differ, then that's fine, but I'll tell you that as a citizen I would be pretty annoyed by this kind of process.

I want to turn to a couple of the other issues. Much has been said about this policy and its attractiveness, and I am supporting in principle the ingredient aspects of this, which are competition, particularly on generation, and a more transparent and rigorous regulatory framework. I agree with previous speakers on those issues.

But I want to report today a conversation I had a few moments ago with my colleague Mrs McLeod who phoned from Fort William to report a circumstance from Thunder

Bay. The third-largest direct consumer of Ontario Hydro in this province is Avenor, the old Great Lakes Paper Co. They were told last night that they interruptible power rate, which had been approximately 2.5 cents a kilowatt-hour, would be going up today because, as one of the previous speakers indicated, we have a system now that is stretched. As the press reported a couple of days ago, because the system is so stressed, we had a voltage reduction of some 3% on or about May 15 because one of the nuclear plants went down unexpectedly.

Last night Avenor was told that because of the exceptional hot weather across southern Ontario, and because, I believe, the Lambton station was under some pressure or stress and was either underperforming or not available in whole or in part, Avenor's interruptible power rate would be going up from about, I think it is, 2.5 cents a kilowatt-hour to 12 cents a kilowatt-hour, they were told last night. By midday today they were told that they are paying a rate that is now apparently \$1.47 a kilowatt-hour. That means for that one Ontario company, a very large employer in Thunder Bay, their hydro bill for today is \$1 million more than they would have expected yesterday.

Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): It doesn't make sense.

Mr Conway: The member from Lanark shakes his head. I'm telling you the plant manager just got off the phone with my colleague. It is a plant I visited not very long ago, and I say to the member from Lanark, he might want to read the Financial Post of June 19, 1998, where it is headlined, "Ontario Hydro Prays for a Cold, Wet Summer."

Mr Jordan: Which has been going on for years.

Mr Conway: I'm going to tell you, you can tell Avenor that. It comes as a great shock to them to find out today that their bill today is \$1 million more than they had budgeted yesterday. God knows what it's going to be for tomorrow or the rest of the week. It is quite clearly indicated in the Financial Post article of June 19, 1998, quoting Mr Patrick McNeil, Ontario Hydro's vice-president for corporate planning. McNeil warns in this article that "voltage reductions are possible if there is an extended period of hot weather coupled with high demand throughout the northeastern part of the North American grid." That was seven or eight days ago and we certainly have been getting hot weather.

Mr Jordan: You've got it for 20 years.

Mr Conway: The fact of the matter is that today of course the situation is aggravated because we've got about 4,000, 5,000 megawatts from the nuclear division that are not available.

I'm just simply pointing out that it is a cost to those people today of approximately \$1 million and they are understandably very concerned at Avenor because they're not going to shoulder those costs. I can't imagine, for very many more days.

I want to correct my own record. I just have a note that the actual cost has gone to \$1.07, not \$1.47, but that's over the course of 12 hours.

Mr Conway: Mr Speaker, will you —

The Acting Speaker: There are some conversations going on that would be better outside the House.

Mr Gilles Poullet (Lake Nipigon): My Costa Rican friend's talking about Maurice Strong.

The Acting Speaker: I'd like to address the member for Lake Nipigon for a moment, who is sitting in an incorrect seat. It won't be a yellow card, it'll be red one.

When the Speaker is standing and he has asked for order, he will not tolerate — I'll not warn you again.

Mr Conway: My point is that you cannot serve both interests, particularly when the interests are in many cases potentially contradictory. The whole point of Newcourt, as a banking house with keen interests in financing and owning these kinds of businesses, their interest is potentially quite contradictory to the interests of Ontario Hydro. If you submitted that question to 10 individuals or laypersons, I think the majority would clearly agree with

my position.

The question remains, not just in this case but in so many related questions, as we head down the road of this enormously important and complicated policy, who will be protecting the public interest? Ontarians have built up enormous shareholder value in this utility over nearly a century and there are going to be very real pressures on that shareholder value in the coming weeks and months, particularly if you look at the British experience. The reality of deregulating the British electrical monopoly was that Her Majesty's taxpayers and citizens got a very bad

deal as assets were sold off, in many cases at 15% or 20% of their real value.

It is inconceivable to me that Mr Farlinger would want to do this, and should he want to do it, that Premier Harris, this government or this assembly would allow it to happen. This is a conflict of interest. It creates a very serious problem in the public mind as to whether or not there is anybody at the head of this corporation or in the government who is truly and really interested in protecting

the public interest.

The Acting Speaker: There's a conversation up in the corner. I'd ask you to tone the volume down or move it outside the House, please.

Mr Conway: My question remains: What mechanisms are there to protect the public interest at every turn, to ensure, particularly when we look at the assets — and of course what do we know about Newcourt? Newcourt capital is advertised everywhere as an asset-based financial corporation. Let me tell you, I'm sure Newcourt has some very interesting plans for some of the assets of Ontario Hydro, if you look at their business elsewhere. I don't fault them for that, but I do fault the government for allowing Mr Farlinger, the chair of Ontario Hydro, paid by the ratepayers to the tune of \$350,000 a year — stay there. Say no to this board directorship, stay at Hydro, protect the public interest, ensure that public shareholder value is not undermined or squandered in these months and years ahead because, in conclusion, as I turn it over to the Mr Phillips, the real test of this policy is: Is the public interest recognized and protected and do the benefits of

this policy of competition and regulation bear fruit for Main Street? I can guarantee you they will certainly bear fruit, and significant fruit, soon for Bay Street and Wall Street.

Mr Phillips: I'm pleased to continue the debate on what we'd call a time allocation motion designed to end debate at second reading on the Hydro bill and move it on to committee, and to say what others have said, obviously, that this is a bill that will impact in a very significant way on all of Ontario. It will shape a totally different electrical service delivery in Ontario for the next century and it has the potential to cause a fair bit of conflict in the province. Along with my colleague Mr Conway, I think we're making a mistake. The Legislature is making a mistake. I think the government is making a mistake to limit the hearings to eight days and to order third reading on the bill before we've even gone through the process of those eight days of hearings.

What's taken place so far — and my colleague Mr Conway mentioned it — is that this is the biggest business deal in North America for the next 10 years. This is it. This is a huge business deal. There's not a financial house in Ontario that hasn't over the last two to three years commissioned major studies on this. Hundreds of millions of dollars are going to be made on this business decision that we're going to make, and so far it's been dealt with, frankly, and understandably, behind closed doors, preventing this bill. But on something this fundamental we should not be limiting ourselves to eight days of public hearings. It is not in the public interest to do that and I frankly don't think it's in the government's interest to limit public hearings to eight days.

Mr Conway mentioned the first kind of evidence of concern. Mr Farlinger, the chair of Hydro, is a well-respected business person, there's no question about that. He has a very distinguished business career in Ontario and is well regarded, as is Newcourt financial services. They're one of the huge success stories in Ontario, grown in the last five years almost, one of the real successful businesses in Ontario. But here is the problem: You can see, with so much money at stake — as I say, this will be the biggest business deal in North America over the next 10 years.

We see the first concern. Mr Farlinger has agreed to sit on the board of Newcourt. He now is a board member. A board of directors has responsibilities to the shareholders to look out for the interests of the shareholders, and Newcourt has to participate. It has to participate in the future business dealings that will fall out from Hydro. That is their business. They have to. So he's gone on to a board where his responsibility is to be a director representing the shareholders, and in representing the shareholders he has to provide direction on the biggest business opportunity over the next 10 years.

The reason we raise this is that it gets back to the need for the public to be assured that as we go forward dealing with their asset — the public own this. The public have invested billions and billions of dollars. There is a debt at Hydro of somewhere around \$35 billion, I gather. The

mortgage without ever knowing what the interest rates are on it. We're being asked to approve today in second reading a bill that we know we'll only have eight days of hearings on, and we know the government is going to force through third reading on it. It's not unlike what we've seen in the last few days.

The labour bill, which will fundamentally change the way collective bargaining takes place in Ontario, was introduced two weeks ago, was rammed through, and the government got away with it. But for the employees in Ontario, to fundamentally change the way they do collective bargaining, never give them a chance to come to their duly elected Legislature and have their views expressed, we're asking people to get angry and to rebel. I mean it in a figurative sense, Mr Speaker.

It's like the election financing bill. Frankly, it is obscene that that bill is being rammed through. Mike Harris has got more money than he knows what to do with in his elections, because he's got lots of well-to-do people who are quite prepared to line the Conservative pocket, but for the other parties it clearly is a disadvantage. Clearly it is the advantage of the privileged party, but it's being rammed through. It is being rammed through with virtually no debate, no agreement, as is tradition, by the other parties. Believe me, it will Americanize politics in the province of Ontario.

Intervention

Mr Phillips: There's Judge Guzzo again, complaining. I would just say to him that it is clearly Americanizing politics in Ontario. We have had a history in this country and in this province where whether you get elected or not does not depend on how much money you spend or how much money you can raise and how many people will give you money but rather on your ideas. We are changing that with that bill.

The reason I mention that is that we've now got another example, and the public should be aware of this. We are being asked to approve a motion tonight that will limit the public hearings on Hydro to eight days, something that is clearly the biggest business deal in North America for the next 10 years. Furthermore, we're not only being ordered to do that; we are then being ordered to approve the bill for third reading when it returns here, with virtually no debate.

As I prepare to turn it over to my colleague from St Catharines, I wanted to get on the record our concerns. I think the people of Ontario are owed substantially more time for involvement in this. I believe, as others have expressed, that this is not just a Toronto issue. We should be giving people across the province an opportunity to participate in this debate. This is not something that should be dependent on whether you have the time to come down to Toronto. We should be giving all the people of this province an opportunity to participate in something that is so fundamental to that.

Those are our concerns and the reason we object to this particular motion.

Mr Bradley:

I'd like to add to the words of wisdom from the member for Kenilworth North and the member for

public are on the hook for that. It is the taxpayers who are obligated to pay that. As a matter of fact, Hydro pays the government of Ontario, the people of Ontario, \$200 million a year so that the public will guarantee the debt of Hydro. That's why none of the credit rating agencies are worried about Hydro's debt, because they say Hydro has got and pays for a guarantee from the taxpayers of Ontario to meet the debt.

1710

As a Legislature, we're going to try to deal with this huge business deal in eight days of public hearings. I think the public will be shaking their heads and saying, "Do you really have the time to look out for our interests?" I would say to the members that there are some concerns. Hydro has frozen rates. How did they do that? How have they frozen rates for 1998? They did it, in my opinion, by playing a game with the numbers. If you read the 1997 annual report that just came out recently, they wrote off \$6 billion of expenses that should have been incurred in 1998, 1999 and the year 2000. They used a little-known authority called the rate-setting authority. What the auditors say about this is that they would not be allowed to do this under generally accepted accounting principles. They did not follow generally accepted accounting principles.

In the annual report, when he's commenting on the rate freeze, Mr Farlinger says, "So, since these costs I've just mentioned will not be recovered through rates, they represent a loss that should be provided for now." So they wrote them off. The effect of all of this, ie, the writing off of that \$6 billion, is that Ontario Hydro will be able to maintain its commitment to a rate freeze until the end of the decade, by essentially writing off expenses that should have been, under general accounting principles, written off in 1998, 1999 and 2000.

Why do I mention that? Because, as I say, the government is giving us a total of eight days for public hearings. I can guarantee that something this complicated cannot be dealt with in eight days of public hearings. We owe it to the taxpayers, dealing with a debt of \$35 billion — the credit rating agencies, by the way, have said to Mike Harris, "We are giving you the same credit rating that we gave Bob Rae." Three years into the mandate, Mike Harris has exactly the same credit rating as Bob Rae had. By the way, at one time Ontario had a AAA credit rating. We've had three credit downgrades, and we still are there. Why? Partially because of the tax cut, but heavily because of Hydro. Here we are being asked to deal with something this fundamental in a total of eight days.

I want to comment briefly on a point that others have made, and that is that there is merit in the thrust of the bill. My colleague Mr Conway, who knows this area well, has expressed on our behalf conditional support for it, subject to the public hearings, but on finding a way that we separate the generation aspects of electrical power from the transmission aspects of electrical power. That may very well be a sound business idea. But I repeat, what we're being asked to do — my colleague Mr Conway used the comparison that it's like going to a bank and getting a

Stardorough-Agincourt just a couple of additional

If you calculate the amount of time spent on time allocation motions — those are motions, by the way, which choke off any further debate on significant government issues, issues before this House. If you calculate how much it costs, I wonder if it would cost as much — and you have seen this, Mr Speaker, yourself — as the full-page ads, which I hope Hydro doesn't embark upon. I've seen these full-page ads —

Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I thought we were debating a certain bill here. I thought that information if we want to continue that debate.

The Acting Speaker: That is a point of order, but I'm just trying to listen to the member get started.

Mr Bradley: Mr Speaker, I've noted with you in the chair that you have always been willing to give a chance to members to get to the point, to bring in all these matters together. What I am concerned about, what I know you would be concerned about, is that under the provisions of this bill which is being forced through with this time allocation motion, Ontario Hydro will not be putting out material such as this.

This of course is the pamphlet put out to all households in Ontario by the Ministry of Health at a cost of \$1.270 million, so every time somebody sees this arrive at the house, that's what they think of. I've seen Hydro do that usually some factual information on, for instance, how to save electricity, how to be involved in conservation, and I hope that the government remembers that. I've even seen — I consider the ads by the so-called hospital restructuring committee to be just a waste of taxpayers' money. But Ontario Hydro, and where this comes in this bill, has the opportunity to promote conservation. What I'm concerned about environmentally is that many of the conservation measures appear to be falling by the wayside. Some of the cheaper and cleaner ways of producing electricity are being shoved aside as Hydro heads in one specific direction.

1720

That is why I wanted to see more hearings take place during the summer, and an opportunity to place amendments, if people had that chance to place amendments. But just as Bill 36, the bill which will allow the Conservative Party to spend massive amounts of money on election campaigns and collect massive amounts from people making contributions, was pushed through this House, without an opportunity for any public hearings in that case, — in case my friend from Quinte had an amendment he wanted to place, I wanted him to have that opportunity.

The door was shut on amendments on Bill 36. Where I there's at least, in this bill dealing with Hydro an opportunity to place an amendment for this House to consider, not to have the door slammed shut by Mike

Mr Lessard: I want to outline at the beginning that I will split my time with the member for Lake Nipigon and also the member for Sudbury East if she is inclined to participate in this debate.

It's unfortunate that once again we're debating a time allocation motion. I think I've spoken three times this week on three separate time allocation motions and it's only Wednesday. This is a government that says they're good managers but seem to be constantly relying on having to bully their way through to get their agenda taken care of. I really consider it an abuse of their position as a majority government.

This week we saw them ramming through a bill dealing with campaign financing, changes to how elections are going to take place in Ontario. They did that in an unprecedented way, without the consensus of all three parties. They rammed that through, no chance for any amendments to be put, no public hearings, just rammed it through.

They also did the same thing with Bill 31, a very anti-labour, anti-union piece of legislation. I received a number of letters from constituents about this, who said, "Let's have public hearings." The government once again said: "No, we're not going to have public hearings on Bill 31. We're going to ram that through." They rammed through another of their pieces of legislation to attack working people in the province. It's a troubling pattern, of introducing legislation, having a couple days of debate, bringing in a time allocation motion, and shutting off that debate and any opportunity for the public to participate and for amendments to be placed.

This is a government for which, clearly, a huge majority isn't enough. What they did was to extend the sittings of the Legislature into the evening, so that instead of just sitting from 1:30 until 6 o'clock at night, we have another day of sitting from 6:30 until 9:30, another day of sitting but without question period, I might add, which is really the time that we as opposition members get to hold this government accountable. That is eliminated during the second sitting, but that's not enough either, they had to change the rules of how we conduct debates here in the Legislature.

You would think that all of those things would be enough, but not even that is enough. They still can't manage their agenda. They still demonstrate a pattern of incompetence and poor management in dealing with their agenda and once again are forced to bring in a time allocation motion to limit debate and ram this piece of legislation through.

What does this time allocation motion do? It says that we are going to have only eight days of hearings with

respect to Bill 35, the bill to deregulate, to break up Ontario Hydro, a bill that has some 161 pages of very technical provisions. The public is only going to have eight days to have any input into this bill.

We've seen pieces of legislation that have been rammed through by this government before. Even though they like to say that they're great managers and run government like a business, there have been numerous examples of terribly flawed legislation that have been introduced in this House and rammed through because we haven't had the opportunity to have the appropriate amount of debate.

A recent example is the property assessment act, where four or five attempts were made to get that right, and that bill was rammed through again. I have no doubt that a year or two from now there are going to be all kinds of mistakes and shortcomings that will be determined, as a result of the implementation of that bill, by people like municipal clerks and treasurers throughout Ontario. That's something the next government's going to have to deal with.

I found a few mistakes in this bill as well. There's a provision in here that sets up the Independent Market Operator, the IMO. The provisions that deal with that talk about how many people are on the board of directors, how they're going to be appointed. It also has a very important provision — this is section 9 — that says, "The directors and officers... shall comply with the provisions of the governance and structure bylaw relating to conflict of interest." I think that's a pretty important provision to have with respect to any of the new agencies that are being set up under Bill 35.

Another two that are being set up are the Generation Corp and the Services Corp. That's being set up in part IV of schedule A. However, in that section of the bill, it doesn't say anything about how many people are going to be on the board of directors or how they're going to be appointed. I would think the government would probably want to try to address this through some amendments. It's just a clear oversight that a bill that has been given such wide consultation, as we've been led to believe, and that has had so many consultants working on it and so much advice provided to the government in preparing — that mistakes like that wouldn't happen.

Part V sets up the Financial Corp. It's interesting that this section doesn't have any provision in it with respect to the members of the corporation having to comply with the conflict-of-interest guidelines. That may be an oversight, but I'd like to address that a little bit in a couple of minutes when I talk about Mr. Farlinger and his relationship with Newcourt financial corporation.

This is a government that says: "Trust us. We're great business managers. What we're doing with Ontario Hydro is without reproach. It's a great idea. Trust us. Promised lower rates, increased protection for the environment? No problem, don't worry about it." In fact, this government went to great lengths today by providing the Ontario government business plans that say what a great job they're doing. The Chair of Management Board stood up to say

that the government's a great manager, but we know what he's really saying. He's saying, "Don't worry, be happy, everything is fine." But do you know what the people I represent in Windsor-Riverside are telling me? They're saying that everything isn't fine. It's not fine. This is just a smokescreen to cover up a pattern of consistent and disastrous cuts to fund this government's phoney tax scheme.

1730

That's what it's all about. It's a tax scheme that benefits those who are the most well off. They claim it's leading to job creation, but our healthy economy has little to do with what is in this business plan. It has a whole lot to do with the health of the American economy, and we'd better all hope the health of that economy continues to be very robust, because if something happens in the United States like happened in Asia or Japan, we're all going to be in trouble in the province of Ontario.

People in Ontario really know what this business plan means. It means more cuts to education, more hospital closings, the closing of more schools. Today it was announced in the newspaper in my area that four schools in Windsor and Essex county could be faced with closure next year. It means the end of many programs we have come to rely on here in Ontario as well. As the Minister of Health is running around the province distributing money for capital funding and trying to establish how health care in the province is actually improving — in fact, they distributed this fancy glossy pamphlet to everybody in the province at a cost of who knows how many millions of dollars to tell us all about how great the health care system is in the province.

The minister is out there handing out dollars to try and bolster the government's attempts to be successful in the next election, which we expect to be very soon, but at the same time she's slashing the operating budgets of hospitals. We've experienced that in our own area and I'm sure other members have experienced that in their areas. People say, "Capital funding is all well and good, but what are we going to do with these fancy buildings and this fancy equipment if we don't have people in the hospitals to provide the services?"

We've seen cuts to environmental protection as well. The Chair of Management Board said today that they need to run government like a business, but I would submit that no business would run like this government. People have no idea how they're going to deal with this government's slash-and-burn agenda. They don't know who is going to be hit next or how they're going to deal with it. That is the context within which we have this time allocation motion dealing with Bill 35.

Basically, the government is saying: "We know what's best for Ontario Hydro. It's all in Bill 35. Trust us. All we need to do is ram this bill through and everything will be fine for consumers, for the environment and for all the taxpayers of Ontario." But I have some real scepticism about the claims of this government when they say, "Trust us," and I see plenty of things here in Bill 35 that cause me concern.

"The government says, 'Trust us,' when they say: 'We don't have a privatization agenda. The break-up of Ontario Hydro has got nothing to do with privatization.' The member for Huron in her remarks said, 'You won't see the word 'privatization' in the bill at all so that's not what we're trying to do here.' But meanwhile, they've appointed Sir Graham Day, who's known as the serial privatizer of Great Britain, to come and be on the board of directors of Ontario Hydro. What gives here? If they really and truly don't have an agenda to privatize Ontario Hydro, put it in the bill. Let's have an amendment that says the privatization of Ontario Hydro isn't going to happen in this legislation. Just put it in there."

We also have heard the news with respect to Mr Farlinger and his recent appointment to Newcourt Credit Group, a corporate finance company that deals with the development of major capital projects such as power facilities. The Premier was asked today whether this sounds like a conflict of interest to him. Mr Farlinger is on the board of Ontario Hydro and he's also on the board at Newcourt financial services. The Premier says he doesn't think that that is a conflict, and if Mr Farlinger thinks there's a conflict and he tells me that there isn't one, well, that's good enough for me.

But it's clearly a conflict, because one of the most important issues that Ontario Hydro is going to have to deal with is the issue of the stranded debt. If Ontario Hydro guesses wrong with respect to the stranded debt, we're going to be in big trouble. What is going to happen if Ontario Hydro is not competitive in this new competitive market, they are going to fold up. If they can't compete, what's going to happen to them?

What is going to happen to the stranded debt in that case? What is going to happen to the assets of Ontario Hydro in the case that they fail?

Well, companies like Newcourt are going to be able to move in to help provide that financing, to take advantage of the opportunities there, and there are tremendous opportunities for millions of dollars of profit to be made through the breakup of Ontario Hydro. Investors are salivating down on Bay Street and Wall Street and in other parts of the world about the opportunities that are going to be opened up through the breakup of Ontario Hydro.

None of us wants to see the new Ontario Hydro Financial Corp fail. We want to see it continue and to ensure that the stranded debt gets paid by consumers of electricity. We don't want to see that debt stuck on taxpayers, which is a very real threat. We also don't want to see that some large power consumers are going to be able to wriggle out of their obligations to pay the stranded debt.

Who is going to be involved in determining what the stranded debt is and how it's going to be paid off? No other than Mr Farlinger. I would imagine he would have a lot to say, and has already had a lot to say, about what the stranded debt for Ontario Hydro is. Whether he is right or whether he is wrong is going to provide opportunities, in my submission, for financial services companies like

Newcourt. That's why it's clearly a conflict. If the Premier doesn't understand that, it's unfathomable to me. Stranded debt is something that is defined in the legislation, of course. It's defined as "the amount of the debts and other liabilities of the financial corporation" — that's Ontario Hydro Financial Corp — "that cannot reasonably be serviced and retired in a competitive electricity market."

What does that mean? We have absolutely no idea. It's another one of these cases where the government is saying: "Trust us. Just let us pass this legislation. We're going to have a discussion paper some time in July that explains how the stranded debt will be determined" — it won't say what the stranded debt is, just how it's going to be determined — "and we'll just carry on."

The key to the success of Bill 35 and the competitiveness of Ontario Hydro in the future and also the ability to lower rates for consumers is all going to be based on the estimate of the stranded debt.

1740

We all know how that stranded debt got there. It got there because of huge cost overruns for the Darlington nuclear power plant, another one of those cases where a Progressive Conservative government said, "Trust us, it's only going to cost a few billion dollars," but it turned out that it cost \$14 billion. This is a government that says: "We have a great business plan. We should run government like a business."

I'm sure they would not want to use that as an example of how they would want people to run their businesses, because that was one of the hugest boondoggles that we ever saw in the province of Ontario, and we're all paying for it now. We're all going to continue to pay for it well into the future. We're going to pay for it, hopefully, as consumers of electricity, but if the government is wrong in their estimates, we're going to get stuck with it as taxpayers and large consumers of electrical power in Ontario are going to be able to get out of their responsibilities to deal with the stranded debt, and that is my real concern here.

It also is a concern because it's Mr Farlinger who was making these wild predictions about what the stranded debt is going to be, whether it's going to be \$15 billion, \$20 billion, \$30 billion. Who knows what it's going to be? But if that guess is wrong, then Mr Farlinger is going to be able to benefit from his association with this Newcourt financial corporation. He can't have it both ways. He's playing both sides of the fence. It's an obvious conflict of interest. He has to make up his mind: Is he going to protect the interests of the public, the taxpayers of the province, the consumers of electric power in Ontario, or is he going to be pursuing his private sector interests that are going to be directly in conflict with the objectives of Ontario Hydro? He needs to make up his mind.

The carrot that the government is holding out in all of this is that rates are going to be reduced. Everybody is going to get lower power rates. All I can say is that if the government really believes that, they should put it in the bill. That's not in there. There is no rate protection in the

get proper scrutiny of this bill. I have serious concerns about how this bill is going to protect consumers and the environment. Until we get answers to those questions, we're not going to be able to support Bill 35.

Mr Pouliot: I have in front of me our House agenda and it says Bill 35, Hydro, a most important issue — we're all consumers — and it says time allocation motion. This tactic has been evoked more than 20 times in this session alone. Well, 82 members as a majority does not suffice this regime. It's not enough to have 82 members out of a House of 130.

First they change the rules and then they wish to limit debate further, and over 20 times they come up with a time allocation motion which is in essence a move to silence the opposition and, yes, one more time the opposition is being silenced. It's a padlock law. It's like coming here in this context with a pair of handcuffs and trying to do your job. Not only do they use their majority muscle at every opportunity, they literally silence the opposition. They rule by decree.

Hydro is so important, inevitably so. What are we confronted with, Mr Speaker? I want you to share with me a day in the life of chairman of the board, chief executive officer, Mr Farlinger. He's the top electricity person in the province of Ontario.

Mr Frank Michlash (Kenora): How much does he make?

Mr Pouliot: He's the big boss and he gets well compensated, about \$350,000 per annum. But that's not all and we don't begrudge him. But a day in the life of Mr Farlinger brings us on the board of directors of Cara, of Manitowish, of Ladlaw. He's a very talented person. A critic would ask, how does he have time to run Ontario Hydro, the largest corporation in the province, while sitting on all these boards? But I compliment him. He is a gifted person. Of course he is a serial director collector. He collects directorships like some people might collect stamps. There's nothing wrong with that. We have no objection whatsoever, in fact we want to wish him well. It's a recognition of his talents. This person is very much in demand.

Where we draw the line is when Mr Farlinger becomes a director of Newcourt Credit Group. Newcourt Credit Group are moneylenders. They're facilitators. They lend money. Well, you might ask quizzically, "What does that have to do with Ontario Hydro?" There is a connection here. Contact is being made.

Ontario Hydro will change its makeup. It will go from public to private. It will be dismantled. And they will need money, because Ontario Hydro has this huge debt, a mountain of debt. At present the debt is exceeding \$32 billion, and they're going to borrow another \$10 billion to \$15 billion to fix the nuclear plants so we don't end up with brownouts and we are still able to get some electricity.

It's been established that that's what they refer to as the stranded debt, that big pool of red spread out over 30, 40 years. You know, the stranded debt — well, we're stranded. Ontarians are stranded. They'll have to pick up

bill; there is no protection that says rates are going to go down or they're guaranteed to even stay the same. There's no protection in there whatsoever. I'd like to see those amendments moved and put in the bill, because once again, if the government's wrong in how they determine what the stranded debt is going to be, it's likely that it's going to be decades, if ever, before consumers ever see a reduction in their rates for hydro in Ontario.

This is a government that likes to say: "Consumers will have more choice. They'll be able to look to different suppliers of electrical energy and work out a deal." This is a government that made past legislation that said tenants should be able to work out a deal with landlords. They want to remove the protection of unions as well, because they think employees should be able to work out a fair deal with employers. It just doesn't happen when people are in such an unfair bargaining position.

It's not going to happen to John and Mary Public, people like myself, small residential consumers. We're not going to go to some company like Pacific Gas and Electric and say, "Please give us a good deal on our electrical power." It's just not going to happen. The people who are big corporate friends of this government. Those are the people who are going to end up with the good deals. What's going to happen to the rest of us is that we're all going to get stuck holding the bag. That's my big concern in this bill: Who is going to benefit and who is going to pay the bills? I'm concerned about the impact this is going to have on small consumers and I'm concerned about the impact it's going to have on our environment because there aren't the protections for the environment that this government is saying are in there.

There's a lot of regulation-making power that says the government may do this, it may do that, but none of it says they shall do it. We need some of those guarantees with respect to protection of the environment because right across the Detroit River from my riding is a power plant that's called the Conners Creek generating station. It hasn't been operating in about 10 years. It's a dirty coal-fired power plant. They want to start that up in July. It's going to increase smog in Ontario. It's going to increase the number of premature deaths because of bad air.

This government needs to take steps to ensure that power plants like Conners Creek aren't able to start up without proper environmental technologies to reduce emissions, and I don't see that in this bill. That's something that we need to see in the bill. The government says, "Trust us, we have this regulation-making power in here," but the Environmental Commissioner has released a scathing report about this government's dealing with the protection of the environment and I don't trust them, frankly, when they say, "Trust us." This is a government that, when it comes to protection of consumers and protection of the environment, is not to be trusted.

I don't support this time allocation motion. I think it's an inappropriate way for this government to deal with their agenda. I don't think eight days of public hearings are going to be enough to give people public input and to

the bill. There is no secret here. The debt will not vanish. We will have to fork over or shell out over \$30 billion. That is a lot of money, so we'll have to borrow. What they will set the corporation at we don't know. Surely they're not going to go bankrupt. We're not going to come to junk bonds.

1750
When this move takes place, when you watch the chess game, we will keep our eyes on the Ontario Securities Commission, because if we don't keep our eyes wide open and warn the OSC of what's taking place, maybe there will be life after Bre-X. Maybe Bre-X will live again, or maybe Mr Milken will propose to us that we come up with junk bonds. And those coupons get more and more expensive.

Why is it that when we're talking about Ontario Hydro, a utility so important that it touches the very life of every-one from morning till night — no one escapes Ontario Hydro; we need it — someone should have the audacity to rule by decree, to come up with the padlock motion one more time. Eighty-two members are not enough. They don't want any opposition.

It means they cannot manage the shop. If anyone believes that a Progressive Conservative government is a good manager of prosperity, they'd better think, and think again, because it is not so. They couldn't manage the simplest of boutiques. They're not the least bit sophisticated when it comes to money management. In fact, the debt at Ontario Hydro will almost double in their term of office. Imagine that. Yet they'll say: "We'll go for a tax break. The provincial debt's going to \$115 billion, but that's okay. We'll throw a big party, where mostly the rich people, the well-to-do" — the name is the address — "are invited. It makes a lot more sense."

We, the opposition, are here to cooperate and, as an alternative, until we form the government after the next election, to offer positive alternatives. One of them is that you pay your debt first. You've gone too far with the practise, with the credit cards. You've had your limit. So why don't you stop partying? Stop giving a tax break to the very rich and go home and render your obligations. Pay your debt first. We will be watching very closely.

It was my leader, Mr Hampton, yesterday in this House who broke the story. Since this has happened, it has taken an extraordinary proportions. Again, we see no conflict, we see no relationship between directorship and chairmanship; Mike Harris says he doesn't see any. But when we bring in Newcourt Credit Group, the money lenders, we see the emergence of a one-stop shop. All you have to do is talk to one person, the director, the chief executive officer of Hydro and a director with the money lenders. It's too close for comfort. We see this thing as a real conflict, and it's not enough for Mike Harris to say that we're trying to be honestly dishonest. It doesn't work here, Mr Premier.

People care about Hydro. We shouldn't be under a gag order. We shouldn't be shackled. We should be able to debate until we see every issue resolved, addressed. The

public will not have that chance. The public has one responsibility: They will be asked to pay, pay and pay again, and to do so in silence. The consumers are being asked to say little. The opposition is being silenced. Decree is the order of the day in Ontario at present. Eighty-two members: not good enough. Change the rules: not good enough. Time closure: not good enough.

It's getting increasingly difficult to represent your constituents in this House because you are not given the tools to do your job. They have been taken away. The toolbox has been stolen and peddled somewhere else. It is carefully. We will be at our post when we see the manoeuvring that takes place between Ontario Hydro and one money lender credit corporation named Newcourt.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Mr Sterling has moved government notice of motion number 25. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?
All those in favour, please say "aye."
All those opposed, please say "nay."
In my opinion, the ayes have it.
Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.
The division bells rang from 1758 to 1803.
The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes	
Gilchrist, Steve	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Amott, Ted	Parker, John L.
Baird, John R.	Newman, Dan
Barrett, Toby	Murdoch, Bill
Beaudoin, Marcel	Martinuk, Gerry
Boushy, Dave	Leadson, Gary L.
Brown, Jim	Leach, Al
Carr, Gary	Kells, Morley
Carroll, Jack	Danford, Harry
Chudleigh, Ted	Doyle, Ed
Fisher, Barbara	Fishier, Barbara
Ford, Douglas B.	Leadsion, Gary L.
Fox, Gary	Leach, Al
Freese, Tom	Kells, Morley
Galt, Doug	Danford, Harry
Hollins, E.J. Douglas	Doyle, Ed
Parker, John L.	Fisher, Barbara
Newman, Dan	Ford, Douglas B.
Murdoch, Bill	Fox, Gary
Martinuk, Gerry	Freese, Tom
Leadson, Gary L.	Galt, Doug
Leach, Al	Hollins, E.J. Douglas
Kells, Morley	Parker, John L.
Danford, Harry	Newman, Dan
Doyle, Ed	Murdoch, Bill
Fisher, Barbara	Martinuk, Gerry
Ford, Douglas B.	Leadson, Gary L.
Fox, Gary	Leach, Al
Freese, Tom	Kells, Morley
Galt, Doug	Danford, Harry
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Parker, John L.	Fisher, Barbara
Newman, Dan	Ford, Douglas B.
Murdoch, Bill	Fox, Gary
Martinuk, Gerry	Freese, Tom
Leadson, Gary L.	Galt, Doug
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Doyle, Ed	Murdoch, Bill
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Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosières
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Administration of Justice / Administration de la justice

Chair / Président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: E.J. Douglas Rollins
Dave Boushy, Bruce Crozier, Peter Kormos,
Gerry Martinuk, Jerry J. Ouellette, David Ramsay,
E.J. Douglas Rollins, R. Gary Stewart, Bob Wood

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Rick Bartolucci
Rick Bartolucci, Gilles Bisson, John C. Cleary,
Ed Doyle, Gerard Kennedy, John L. Parker,
Trevor Pettit, Wayne Weillauer, Terence H. Young

Finance and economic affairs / Finances et affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Gary J. Guzzo
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Wayne Weillauer
Ted Arnott, John R. Baird, Jim Brown, Gary J. Guzzo,
Monte Kwinler, Gerry Phillips, E.J. Douglas Rollins,
Tony Sliipo, Wayne Weillauer

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: John R. O'Toole
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Julia Munro
Mike Colle, Harry Danford, Barbara Fisher,
Tom Froese, Steve Gilchrist, Wayne Lessard,
Julia Munro, John R. O'Toole, Mario Sergio

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Présidente: Frances Lankin
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Rosario Marchese
Alex Cullen, Michael Gravelle, Bill Grimmer,
Dan Newman, Joseph Spina, R. Gary Stewart,
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Joseph N. Tascona
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Gary Fox
Alvin Curling, Carl DeFaria, Gary Fox, Ernie Hardeman,
Helen Johns, Allan K. McLean, Gilles E. Morn, Marilyn
Mushinski, Peter North, Gilles Pouliot, Joseph N. Tascona

Clerk / Greffier: Peter Sibenik

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: Bernard Grandmatire
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Richard Patten
Marcel Beaubien, Bernard Grandmatire, Bill Grimmer,
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Shelley Martel, Richard Patten,
Peter L. Preston, Joseph N. Tascona, Terence H. Young

Regulations and private bills / Réglements et projets de loi privés

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Dave Boushy
Toby Barrett, Dave Boushy, David Caplan,
Ernie Hardeman, Gary L. Leadsom, Tony Martin,
Tony Ruprecht, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan,
Clerk / Greffier: Viktor Kaczkowski

Resources development / Développement des ressources

Chair / Présidente: Brenda Elliott
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Peter L. Preston
David Christopherson, Ted Chudleigh, Sean G. Conway,
Brenda Elliott, Doug Gail, John Haslings, Pat Hoy,
Bart Maves, Peter L. Preston

Social development / Affaires sociales

Chair / Présidente: Annamarie Castelli
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Dwight Duncan
Marion Boyd, Jack Carroll, Annamarie Castelli,
Dwight Duncan, Tim Hudak, Frank Klees,
Lyn McLeod, Lillian Ross, Bruce Smith

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Helen Johns, Allan K. McLean, Gilles E. Morn, Marilyn
Mushinski, Peter North, Gilles Pouliot, Joseph N. Tascona

Clerk / Greffier: Peter Sibenik

Ombudsman

Chair / Président: Marcel Beaubien
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Trevor Pettit
Dominic Agostino, Marcel Beaubien, Douglas B. Ford,
Helen Johns, Allan K. McLean, Trevor Pettit,
Sandra Pappalieu, Bill Vankoughnet, Len Wood

OTHER BUSINESS

Member's privilege	1825
Members' conduct	1825
The Speaker	1825
Standing committee on government agencies	1827
The Speaker	1827
Report deemed adopted	1827
Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day	1830
Mr Morn	1830

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 24 juin 1998

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 1998 modifiant la Loi sur les tribunaux judiciaires (amélioration de la Cour de la famille), projet de loi 48, <i>M. Harnick</i>	1826
Adoptée.....	1826

Loi Gordie Kirwan de 1998

modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation (élèves en difficulté), projet de loi 49, <i>M. McGuinty</i>	1826
Adoptée.....	1826

Loi de 1998 sur l'obligation de

rendre des comptes à l'égard des soins de santé et sur la déclaration des droits des patients, projet de loi 50, <i>M^{me} Boyd</i>	1826
Adoptée.....	1826

Loi de 1998 sur le centre appelé

Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre, projet de loi 51, <i>M^{me} Wimmer</i>	1827
Adoptée.....	1827

Loi de 1998 sur les jeunes

délinquants (Ontario), projet de loi 52, <i>M. Jim Brown</i>	1827
Adoptée.....	1827

TROISIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 1998 modifiant des lois

en ce qui concerne les élections, projet de loi 36, <i>M. Hodgson</i>	1826
Adoptée.....	1826

AUTRES TRAVAUX

Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste

M. Morn.....	1830
M. Bisson.....	1830
M. Beaudin.....	1831

CONTENTS

Wednesday 24 June 1998

MOTIONS

Committee sittings

Mr Sterling 1841
Agreed to 1841

PETITIONS

Charitable gaming

Mr Bradley 1841, 1843
Young offenders 1841
Abortion 1841

Mental health services

Mr Gravelle 1841
Protection for health care workers 1841

Protest for health care workers

Mr Baird 1842
Mr Christopherson 1842

Nurses' bill of rights

Mr Gravelle 1842
Mr Michalsch 1844

Linhaven Home for the Aged

Mr Bradley 1843
Firearms control 1843

Occupational health and safety

Mr Christopherson 1843
Chiropractic health care 1843

THIRD READINGS

Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 1998, Bill 36, Mr Hodgson

Agreed to 1832

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Time allocation, government notice of motion number 25, Mr Sterling

Mr Sterling 1844
Mrs Johns 1846
Mr Stewart 1849

Mr Conway 1850
Mr Phillips 1853
Mr Bradley 1855
Mr Lessard 1855
Mr Pouliot 1858
Agreed to 1859

Juvenile Delinquents Act (Ontario), 1998, Bill 52, Mr Jim Brown

Agreed to 1827

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

Government's agenda

Mr Hodgson 1827
Mr Cullen 1829
Mr Hampton 1829

Senior Achievement Awards

Mr Jackson 1828
Mr Phillips 1828
Mrs Boyd 1829

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hospital restructuring

Mr McGuinly 1832
Mr Hartis 1833

Services for the disabled

Mr McGuinly 1833
Mr Hartis 1833

Government advertising

Mr Hampton 1834
Mr Hartis 1834

Poverty

Mr Hampton 1835
Mr Hartis 1836

Ontario Hydro

Mr Conway 1836
Mr Hartis 1837

Volunteer children's services

Mr Ouellette 1838
Mrs Marland 1838

Ice storm

Mr McGuinly 1838
Mr Leach 1839
Mr Lalonde 1839

Education funding

Mr Wildman 1839
Mr David Johnson 1839

Forest firefighting

Mr Grimmett 1840
Mr Snobelen 1840

Apprenticeship training

Mr Caplan 1840
Mr David Johnson 1840

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Italian Canadian community

Ms Castelli 1823

Community care access centres

Ms Martel 1823

Sewage and water treatment

Mr Grimmett 1823

National unity

Mr Ruprecht 1824

Government services

Mr Marchese 1824

Norfolk Co-operative

Mr Barrett 1824

School closures

Mr Duncan 1824

Air quality

Mr Lessard 1825

Ice Cream Festival

Mr Hardeman 1825

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

Standing committee on regulations and private bills

Mr Barrett 1826
Agreed to 1826

FIRST READINGS

Courts of Justice Amendment Act (Improved Family Court), 1998, Bill 48, Mr Harnick

Agreed to 1826
Mr Harnick 1826

Gordie Kirwan Education Amendment Act (Exceptional Pupils), 1998, Bill 49, Mr McGuinly

Agreed to 1826
Mr McGuinly 1826

Health Care Accountability and Patients' Bill of Rights Act, 1998, Bill 50, Mrs Boyd

Agreed to 1826
Mrs Boyd 1826

Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre Act, 1998, Bill 51, Mrs Witmer

Agreed to 1827
Mrs Witmer 1827

Peterborough General Hospital Act, 1998, Bill P-20, Mr Stewart

Agreed to 1827



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of Ontario
Second Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 36^e législature

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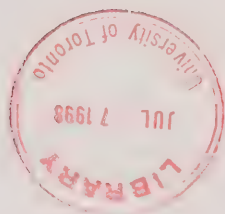
Mercredi 24 juin 1998

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

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Claude L. DesRosiers

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

TAX CUTS FOR PEOPLE AND
FOR SMALL BUSINESS ACT, 1998
LOI DE 1998
SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES IMPÔTS
DES PARTICULIERS ET DES
PETITES ENTREPRISES

Mr Baird moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill 15, An Act to cut taxes for people and for small
business and to implement other measures contained in the
1998 Budget / Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à réduire les im-
pôts des particuliers et des petites entreprises et à mettre
en œuvre d'autres mesures contenues dans le budget de
1998.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs Marion Boyd): : The
member for Nepean has moved third reading. The member
for Nepean.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): On a point of
order, Madam Speaker: If the member for Nepean is going
to grace us with his words of wisdom, we should at least
have a quorum in the House.
The Acting Speaker: Clerk, would you check to see if
there is quorum in the House.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is
not present, Speaker.
The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.
Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present
The Acting Speaker: The member for Nepean may
now continue.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): I want to say at the out-
set of my remarks that we've got a real treat tonight.
We've got a number of speakers I hope to share my time
with. On the agenda tonight we've got the very hard-
working member for York East; a noted environmentalist,
the member for Northumberland; and the ever-charismatic
member for Etobicoke-Humber, who's just entering the
room. For those of you who are tuning in on TV, don't
adjust your TV set, you've got a lot of good remarks to
come to you.

I'm pleased to speak to Bill 15, which is the first
budget bill arising from the 1998 budget presented in the
House more than a month and a half ago by our colleague
the Minister of Finance, the Honorable Ernie Eves.

We believe that the provincial government, the gov-
ernment of Ontario, can have a tremendously positive or
negative impact on job creation. For 10 years we saw the

notion. We totally reject it.
At the same time as we're discussing the economic
policies contained in this budget, there are some out there
who, you'll be shocked to learn, believe that a provincial
government without the control of the currency, without
the control of fiscal policy, can do nothing with respect to
the economy, that the government of Ontario has no power
to influence job creation in the province. I want to say that
those of us on this side of the House totally reject that

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negative impact and now we're seeing the very positive impact, not of spending the taxpayers' money and seeking simply to redistribute wealth, but rather of trying to create an environment where the private sector, where the businesses of Ontario can create jobs for people. That is very much our view.

I didn't hear anyone in the last provincial election running for office saying, "By the way, if you elect me there's nothing I can do or seek to influence to help the economy." Each party ran with an economic plan that they believed would put the economy on the right track. The good news is that the plan that this party, this government, this caucus and this cabinet with this Premier put on the table is being implemented and exactly what they said would happen is happening. The unemployment rate is falling. More people are working now in Ontario than at any other time in our history. The economy is doing well. We've got to rededicate our efforts to ensuring that that is felt in every part of this province and that we continue to recognize the importance of job creation for our work as legislators.

Some people say that it's simply the value of the Canadian dollar, or where interest rates happen to sit, where Gordon Thibessen — a constituent of Nepean, I might add — would set interest rates or where the US economy is, and that's going to completely dictate where the performance of the Ontario economy lies. That's certainly not the case in other provinces. In other provinces, the economy is not doing as well as in Ontario. I believe that the economic policies set out in three successive budgets and a number of financial statements are having an incredibly positive effect on job creation in Ontario.

We believe we can create an environment where the private sector can create jobs. But to do that, we had to make a very fundamental decision at the outset of the process. We had to determine what was priority number one. Was it going to be the deficit or was it going to be job creation? Those of us on this side of the House unanimously said that job creation was priority number one. Whether it was in Stevenage, whether it was in Kitchener-Waterloo, whether it was in Petrolia or Sarnia, whether it was in the former Kingston township, in Frontenac-Addington, whether it was in Etobicoke, we believed, all of us, that job creation was the top priority. For those people who were so narrowly focused on just the deficit, we were unprepared to say that we would simply balance the budget over the first three or four years and then get on to job creation in the future. The answer was no, we were going to make job creation priority number one.

That was a tough decision. After that, everything was very easy. We could say that we could create jobs and cut taxes at the same time as balancing the budget. The leadership demonstrated by this government has shown that they are prepared to make the tough decisions to ensure that we can leave a balanced budget for the next generation, to ensure that our future generations aren't saddled with the \$11.3-billion deficits that we inherited from the previous government.

We said that we would balance the budget in the full course of a term, which is five years. The good news is that in every single quarter of every single fiscal year we have not just met those targets, but rather we have exceeded them. An \$11.3-billion deficit, just three years ago, quickly went down to \$9.3 billion and that was succeeded by \$8.1 billion. Then we got the revised financial statement and it went down to \$8.7 billion. Then it went down to \$8.2 billion. Then it went down to \$6.6 billion. Then it went down to \$5.6 billion. Then they revised them again and they went down to \$5.2 billion. In the budget this year, the deficit is scheduled to fall well below \$4.2 billion.

1840

Intjections.

Mr Baird: The good news is that we've set aggressive targets and we've been able to meet those targets on each and every occasion. We've built in solid contingency funds to ensure we meet them, which is something that the previous government simply couldn't do, as the member for Ottawa-Rideau said. The member for Oxford said, "How did the NDP meet their targets?" Far too often, they didn't meet their targets. To be very fair, as I think you have to be in this debate, the New Democratic Party was elected on September 10, 1990. On September 10, there was a balanced budget.

Intjection.

Mr Baird: September 6, 1990. The budget was balanced and in fact there was a \$75-million surplus. There was three weeks in between the election and when the Honourable Floyd Laughten found his way to the seventh floor of the Frost Building. Do you know what happened in those three weeks?

Intjection: No, tell us.

21 days a \$4-billion deficit developed. That is literally \$10 million for every working hour that went by during that transition period. Somehow the balanced budget evaporated in some 21 days. By October 1, some 21 days after the New Democratic Party was elected, when they took office, a \$4-billion deficit developed. I checked the campaign literature from the Liberals across the province and I found a balanced budget, a \$75-million surplus. That certainly didn't develop and that was extremely important. We made some very tough and aggressive goals for balancing the budget. The good news, and I know you'll be pleased to hear this as will people across the province, is that on every single occasion they've not just met those targets but they have exceeded them.

The number one goal, to try to create jobs and an environment for jobs, was to try to boost consumer confidence, which was lagging far too much across Ontario. Those people who were unemployed simply had no money to spend. Those people who were fortunate enough to have a job were holding on to every dear penny for dear life because they were afraid they'd lose their job. They were afraid they'd lose their job, they were afraid they'd have their hours cut back, they were afraid their spouse would become unemployed, they were afraid they wouldn't have

enough to retire, so they weren't spending any money.

Mr Gary J. Guzzo (Ottawa-Rideau): Fear of the

social contract.

Mr Baird: Particularly fear of the social contract, as

the member for Ottawa-Rideau said, was indeed part of

the issue.

The member for Ottawa-Rideau will know that in our

community of Ottawa-Carleton it was the fear of the

Chrétien layoffs in the federal public service. We know

that under the Conservative government in Ottawa the

federal public service grew by 400, but then the federal

Liberal government came into place and let go 45,000

people — 20,000 in our community. I don't remember

reading about that in their election platform in 1993 either.

In our community we had the fear of the federal public

service layoffs, which were tough and were undoubtedly

required. They were undertaken, so there was a tremen-

dous lack of consumer confidence.

But the number one problem with consumer confidence

was the high taxes we were paying in Ontario.

Mr Hudak: Huge taxes.

Mr Baird: Huge taxes, as the member for Niagara

South said. In Ontario, we were paying the second-highest

income tax rate in the country, second only to Newfoundland.

I read a good speech the other day by my colleague the

member for Niagara South where he very eloquently made

some of these points.

As a government, we set out to say that we were not

going to be able to grow the economy and create jobs with

the second-highest income tax rate in Canada. We set out

to change that and we are following through with Bill 15

to cut provincial income tax rates from what were the

second-highest in the country. A week from today, you'll

be interested to know, this government will have lived up

to its 30% income tax reduction. That is indeed good

news.

Mr Guzzo: Repeat that.

Mr Baird: The member for Ottawa-Rideau says to

repeat that. It's actually not 30%; it's 30.2%. That type of

income tax reduction is putting a lot of income into peo-

ple's pockets. I had a number of people come into my

constituency office of the member for Wentworth East

or the member for Cambridge, and say: "John, I've got my

tax forms out here and my tax cut exceeds 30%. Could

you explain that to me?" We took their tax forms out and I

was able to show them that if you are of modest or middle-

class means your tax cut is actually greater than 30%.

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton): That's where it

should be.

Mr Baird: That's where it should, as the member for

Lambton said. I want to first acknowledge the member for

Lambton and the member for Sarnia for their three-year

effort to try to help create a climate for job creation in

Sarnia-Lambton with the recent passage of labour legis-

lation, which will undoubtedly be a job windfall for the

people of Sarnia-Lambton. They've worked extremely hard on that. The Minister of Labour eventually just threw his hands up and said, "These guys have been fighting for three years," and gave into the new jobs that are going to be coming to Sarnia-Lambton as a result of the efforts of this provincial government.

We set out to cut the income tax rate. We started with the second-highest in Canada and, as of seven days from today, we will have the lowest income tax rate in the country, right here in Ontario. That will undoubtedly be a real boon to investment and that will undoubtedly be a real boon to allow people to keep more of their hard-earned tax dollars. We wonder what happens when you let people keep more of their hard-earned tax dollars.

Mr Hudak: What's happens?

Mr Baird: First, when taxes are too high we know what happens. I have here a very interesting article from the Toronto Sun:

"Martin Admits Taxes Too High. 'Obviously I think taxes are too high,' Finance Minister Paul Martin said, 'and we would like to bring them down, but we're not going to bring them down.' Nor would the finance minis-ter choose between investing in government programs. 'I think we should do both.'"

But of course this was before the last federal election and now we find out that promised tax cuts before the election have turned out to be no tax cuts from the federal Liberal government.

Interjection.

Mr Baird: The member for Kenora talks about —

The Acting Speaker: Member for Nepean, take your

seat for a moment. When the member for Nepean has the

floor, he gets to talk. When you folks take the floor, you

get to talk. Member for Nepean.

Mr Guzzo: Well, there's a novel ruling.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Ottawa-Rideau,

come to order.

Mr Baird: The tax cuts are very important because

what's going to happen? The tax cuts that the federal Lib-

eral government promised of course have not materialized.

The member for Kenora says, "What about property

taxes at the local level?" In Nepean, they've cut property

taxes by 2%. They had a big fight. Were they going to cut

them by 0.8%, 1%, 2% or 5%? There was a big debate in

Nepean city council, but Councillor Jan Harder led the

fight and was able to get a 2% cut in property taxes in

Nepean.

Interjection.

Mr Baird: A very good woman indeed, as the member

for Lambton says.

Anyway, what's the effect on consumer confidence in

my community? That's what I'm here to tell you. The

Ottawa Citizen from earlier this month:

"Indicators Point to Expanding Economy. More jobs,

rising retail sales in Ottawa generate optimism and con-

sumer confidence. Rising employment and a solid per-

formance in key business indicators continue to show the

Ottawa area economy in a strong expansion mode, a

review of the latest economic indicators show."

We talked about consumer confidence. Sales at department stores in the first four months of the year totalled nearly \$199 million, up 14% from the same period last year, the federal Statistics Canada bureau reported. That is indeed very good news. Retail sales are up and one of the big factors that contributes to that is the provincial government is allowing taxpayers to keep more of their own hard-earned tax dollars. That 10.8% unemployment rate that I encountered when I first set out for election to this place is now down to 6.8% and falling. That's what it's all about.

Bill 15, in some concluding remarks, does a whole host of things. It implements the last phase of the provincial income tax reduction, that job-creating tax cut. It also seeks some reductions in corporate taxes. Someone said, "Is that a corporate tax cut for the big corporations in Ontario?" Not at all. It's a tax cut for small corporations and it's a 50% reduction of corporate tax for small businesses to be implemented over the next eight years, because we on this side of the House know the very important role that small businesses play in job creation. We want to have as vibrant a small business sector in the economy as we can have because the government of Ontario recognizes that small business means more jobs. That's extremely important.

1850

The unemployment rate in my region is down to 6.8%. We're continuing to work very hard, because as long as there's one person out there looking for employment who can't find it, that's one person too many. We're working extremely hard on that. When you look at the economic numbers, we see more than 350,000 net new jobs created in the province in the last two years and 10 months, and that is indeed good news.

Some of the other measures to help that job creation contained in the tax reduction bill: I've already mentioned the tax reduction for individuals that is more than 30% for the small and middle-class. I've mentioned the corporate tax cuts for small business, to cut that by 50% over the next eight years.

I also want to talk about the land transfer tax cut. What this does is extend the land transfer rebate. When first-time home buyers buy their first home, this will return a portion — and all in certain cases — of the land transfer tax for new homes constructed. In my community, in Longfields and Davidson Heights and Centre Point, there's a tremendous amount of new home construction in the province, and this is undoubtedly helpful. There's significant new home construction in Cumberland and Stittsville and in Kanata in my region, so obviously that's having a positive effect. It's not responsible for everything, but it's undoubtedly having a very positive effect.

That is indeed good news for those people looking for work and good news for those people who say that job creation must be our top priority, because that's the whole purpose behind Bill 15 and the provincial budget tabled in May 1998. It's all a package designed to help stimulate the economy, to boost consumer confidence, to give small

business and the job creation industries in Ontario more technology. For far too long there haven't been enough education spaces for the high-technology sector, particularly in post-secondary education. So this 1998 budget brings \$150 million of new money to double the number of computer science and electrical engineering and computer engineering spaces so we can help double the pipeline.

That was proposed by the Canadian Advanced Technology Association. They deserve a lot of credit for very eloquently pushing that issue. It's another example where a presentation came before the standing committee and it was recommended as an issue in the report and then finally adopted in the provincial budget. That will have an incredible effect on job creation, not just in Nepean and Kanata but in Cambridge and in Kitchener-Waterloo. The member for Kitchener knows the importance of high technology to his region, as is the case in Markham and the greater Toronto area as well, the three high-tech centres in the province. That will have undoubtedly a very positive effect on job creation.

Bill 15 is about economic growth. It's about job creation. It's about Ontario once again leading the economic recovery in Canada and being among the leaders in its early adoption. On this second-last night before we break, I especially look forward to hearing my colleagues the members for York East, Northumberland and Etobicoke-Humber.

Mr John L. Parker (York East): It's my pleasure to join in the debate tonight on Bill 15. As always, it's an honour to follow the member for Nepean after his fine remarks on this very significant bill, and of course after me comes my colleague from Northumberland. The three of us are but warm-up acts for the fourth and final speaker on this bill. We are but messengers for he whose thong we are unworthy to tie, the member for Etobicoke-Humber. I am looking forward to hearing his remarks on this very important bill later on this evening.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North): I can't picture Doug in a thong.

Mr Parker: My friend from Halton is trying to picture the member for —

Mr Baird: Don't even go there.

Mr Parker: Use your imagination and you can do it. The bill before us tonight is Bill 15, An Act to cut taxes for people and for small business and to implement other measures contained in the 1998 Budget. This bill in essence is an omnibus bill that brings together a host of tax amendments — all tax cuts — arising out of the 1998 budget delivered by the Minister of Finance just a few short weeks ago. It brings into effect tax cuts in the Income Tax Act, the Corporations Tax Act, the Highway Traffic Act, the Land Transfer Tax Act, the Ontario Loan

Act, 1988, the Ontario Lottery Corporation Act and the Retail Sales Tax Act.

It makes amendments to other acts as well, but in these particular acts, after 10 years of tax increases, from 1985

through 1995, this government has reversed that trend. It

has begun bringing taxes down, and Bill 15 brings further

tax cuts as part of the program of this government to bring

about jobs, hope and opportunity in this province.

We know that the years from 1985 through 1995 were

difficult years for this province. I want to make it clear

right off the top that I think the Bob Rae government has

been the target of undeserved criticism for its part in those

difficult years and for the deficits of those years and for

the debt that was built up over those years, because we

know that although the Rae government did not respond

appropriately to the challenges of those years, the chal-

lenges were not entirely of their own making. Those chal-

lenges were inherited from the government immediately

beforehand.

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): Who was

that?

Mr Parker: That was the Peterson Liberal government

from 1985 to 1990. It's probably the best thing that could

possibly have happened to Premier Peterson that he lost

the 1990 election, because he got out before the story

broke on just what a dismal condition the province of

Ontario was in after five years of Liberal government. It

was the Bob Rae government that was the unfortunate

successor to that terrible legacy. We know that during the

NDP years, before they even had breakfast in the morning

there was another billion or so dollars of debt that the

province had fallen into as a result of a track that this

province had been set on by the previous government.

How did those two governments attempt to deal with

the problems of the economic times they put us in? As Mr

Peterson saw the cost of government going up, he in-

creased the spending on the public service in this province

and on transfer payments given by the provincial govern-

ment, and as they borrowed more and more to cover those

costs they followed the approach of taxing more and more

to try to cover the cost of borrowing and to try to cover

some of the costs the government was incurring. But each

time they raised taxes — and they did a lot of that, over

30 times during the Liberal years — they further de-

pressed the ability of the economy of Ontario to create

wealth to generate the revenues to meet the needs of the

government, which were constantly on the increase.

That was the track this province was set on through the

years 1985 to 1990 and that was the situation that the Bob

Rae government inherited. What did the Bob Rae govern-

ment do to try to deal with that tendency? They continued

to raise taxes even further. With each new tax increase —

and there were over 30 under the Rae government — the

ability of the economy to generate wealth was further

depressed and we saw more and more people out of work

welfare rates so those people who were on welfare got

more welfare, and that further increased the dependency

on provincial spending, which increased the costs to the

1900

There was some attempt to hide all of this by keeping

two sets of books. There was a set of books for the tax-

payees and the citizens of Ontario to see, but there was

another set of books for the lenders on Wall Street and in

Frankfurt to see that told the true story. The first measure

that this government took to rectify that situation was to

have one set of books so that the story we were telling to

Wall Street and to Frankfurt was exactly the same as we

were telling to our taxpayers and to our constituents here

in the province — no more trying to pull the wool over the

eyes of the citizens of Ontario as to exactly what the

situation was with the Ontario economy.

This government inherited a debt approaching

\$100 billion and an annual deficit of over \$10 billion, and

we decided that the old ways of trying to deal with the

situation were not good enough. They'd been tried and

they'd failed. Increasing borrowing and increasing taxes is

not the way to deal with the problems of the economy. It's

not the way to create jobs, it's not the way to create hope

and opportunity.

We set about an entirely different approach, and this

was the approach that we were committed to in the 1995

election. We set out upon an approach of reducing taxes,

taking less out of the economy, less out of the pockets of

the people who were earning money, and giving new hope

and new opportunity to the people of Ontario to generate

wealth, to generate more jobs, to generate taxpaying jobs

so that there were fewer people dependent on welfare for

their livelihood, more people working, more people paying

taxes, more people earning good incomes, more people

looking after their own families, more people paying

taxes, more revenue coming into the government, more

the needs of those among us who are less fortunate.

All of this is directed towards getting out of that psy-

chology of Ontario as a place where things are looking

down, where there's no hope and where you only hope is

to get some form of government assistance to help you get

by, and turn Ontario back into the best place in the world

to live, to work and to raise a family.

This Bill 15 is an important part of that effort, because

with this bill we take further steps on that road towards

getting taxes down, revitalizing the economy and setting

us back on that track of jobs, hope and opportunity.

What has the track record been over the last five years?

According to the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in

February 1998: "1997 saw Ontario on a very strong

upward economic path, with the momentum likely to

continue through 1998 and 1999. A strong domestic

We have seen a reduction in the number of people who need to rely on welfare of over 250,000 over the same period of time. That's 100,000 children whose families are no longer dependent on welfare to keep a roof over their heads. People are getting off welfare and are getting paying jobs in the private sector.

The projections for employment over the years to come by all accounts are another 480,000 jobs by the end of 1998, 640,000 by 1999, and by the turn of the century there's every expectation that there will be 825,000 net new jobs in the province from June 1995. As I mentioned earlier, that will also mean a substantial number of people off welfare, no longer dependent on welfare, into paying jobs, looking after their families, looking after their needs and the needs of those around them.

What's happened with the provincial budget in the process? I've mentioned that the government's focus has been on job creation over this period. We still have that deficit. The deficit is coming down. The deficit is coming down not because the government has been raising taxes — the government has in fact been reducing taxes — but the increase in economic activity in the province has generated more revenue, and that has helped bring the deficit down. Whereas we had a deficit of over \$10 billion in 1995, by the end of the 1996-97 fiscal year the deficit was \$8.2 billion, the year after that \$6.6 billion, in the current year it's projected to be \$4.8 billion, and the projections indicate that there should be a balanced budget in this province by the end of the year 2000-2001, which is on track with the plan this government had for balancing the budget as well as creating new jobs — jobs, hope and opportunity.

1910

I will conclude my remarks at this point. This is a bill that achieves many of the goals of this government as far as job creation and tax reduction are concerned. Bear in mind that the job creation in Ontario has represented two thirds of all the job creation right across the country. Of every three new jobs that have been created in Canada since 1995, two of them have been created here in Ontario. Bill 15 will keep us on track, creating more jobs and more prosperity in this province.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? The member for Northumberland.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on Bill 15, the Tax Cuts for People and for Small Business Act. As I was putting some notes together, thinking about this bill and reading through it, there started running through my mind some of the criticisms that our government's received, some of the undue criticisms of course, talking about the tax cuts, as to whether they were they really necessary and would we be further ahead without them, all that kind of thing. Certainly the answer's loud and clear: We wouldn't have been.

A quote came to mind: "We can't predict the future. We can only invent it." I think the invention of our platform, the developing of that platform and then carrying it out have certainly put this province on the road to pros-

perity. That's what the Bank of Commerce had to say in February 1998 about the Ontario economy as a result of the measures that have been taken over the past three years under the Mike Harris government.

Real gross domestic product growth in 1997 in Ontario was 4.8%. We're back on a growth track and we're increasing the size of the economy, increasing the ability of our economy to look after the needs of Ontario citizens. The unemployment rate is down: more people working, fewer people out of work, more people earning an income and looking after their families, paying taxes, helping to carry the needs of the government and to finance the services the government provides.

Job creation over this period: Remember, my colleague from Nepean made the point that this government faced a very critical decision in 1995 about whether we were going to concentrate on attacking the deficit, which was over \$10 billion, or concentrate on creating jobs. We're doing a bit of both, because we have to attack that deficit. We can't carry on with a deficit of over \$10 billion a year, costing us \$1 million every minute just to carry the debt load. We can't go on that way.

But you don't solve your economic problems by putting people out of work and carrying on with the kind of unemployment and the kind of joblessness that this province had seen over the previous 10 years. The best way to turn the economy around and get people to see that this is a province of hope, jobs and opportunity is to concentrate on getting people off welfare, getting people back to work and getting the economy going again. We have stressed measures directed at increasing employment in this province.

By the end of 1995 we had already seen an increase in employment in this province of about 19,000 new jobs. That's net new jobs, bearing in mind that part of the government program, part of this government's approach to reducing the size and scope and weight of government on the shoulders of the taxpayers, is to reduce the size of the provincial government and we've been urging our transfer partners also to find efficiencies in their operations so they can do more for less. That has resulted in some reduction in employment in the public sector, but there has been a far more than compensatory increase in employment in the private sector.

At the end of 1995 there was a net increase in employment of 19,000 jobs. By the end of 1996 we saw a net increase in employment of 91,000 new jobs, and by the end of 1997 a net increase in employment across the province of 263,000 new jobs. That's enough new jobs to fill the Toronto SkyDome more than five times over. That's the degree of job creation that we have seen since the Mike Harris government took office in June 1995. At the same time, where have these employees come from? A lot of them were former welfare recipients, people who had given up hope in the previous years, people who couldn't find work before, people who had to turn to public welfare to pay their bills and to make ends meet.

perity. What started running through my mind was, where

would we have been had we not won the election, had the

Liberals come through, as the polls showed when the

campaign started out? So I started reading through the red

book to see where we would be three years later if Lyn

McLeod happened to be the Premier. As I looked at the

red book, I thought an awful lot of plagiarizing had gone

on, copying from our platform. I looked at the actions, past

and present, of the Liberals.

In summary, what I was seeing was that taxes of course

would be higher, because they always get upset if we

reduce taxes. If we were not stimulating the economy and

bringing in more revenue, the debt would have been

higher. I know right well there would have been no reform

of the municipal governments, of education or health. It

likely would have just gone on, business as usual, with abso-

lutely no new direction or absolutely no direction what-

soever for this province.

As I looked in the red book, it said they would have cut

12,000 positions from the civil service. We're kind of

close. It was 14,000; they were going to cut 12,000. They

did a lot of yelling as we cut back, but they weren't that

far off — another kind of copy from the Common Sense

Revolution.

Big question, really: Where would the debt be, where

would the deficit be, where would taxes be, if Lyn

McLeod were Premier today? If Lyn McLeod were Pre-

mier, probably Gerry Phillips would be the Treasurer — a

very competent MPP, no question. As I think about him in

that role, he'd have no support from the leader, he'd have

no support from the cabinet. He understands what's right

about the economy and what should be happening. He'd

be arguing about the book being far worse than they ever

expected when they took them over, but they'd probably

still be keeping the two sets of books — they would be

enjoying that very much — that the NDP developed; very

cagily, I might add.

As I looked through the red book, they talked about a

5% tax cut. I really don't think they would have followed

through on that tax cut because we know what Liberal

promises are, especially if we look at the federal Liberals.

They promised to cut the GST, they promised to get rid of

helicopters and they promised to get rid of the privatiza-

tion of the airport. What's happened since? Now they're

ending up paying the same amount of money. They're out

there privatizing the airport activity.

We know what happens when Liberals make promises.

They had some 33 tax increases during that term of 1985 to

1990. I know right well the employer health tax is one of

those taxes that kills jobs, one of the worst job killers

going. They brought it in so I doubt they would have

golden rid of it; they might have actually increased it. They

probably would have succumbed to the wooing of the

federal Liberals and would have harmonized the GST and

the PST, at great expense to Ontario. We've seen what's

happened in other provinces where they've gone ahead

with this harmonizing of those two taxes.

I know right well they wouldn't have cut the corporate

tax because corporations are big, bad people, even in

small business. The corporate tax would still be in place.

They wouldn't have looked at anything like cutting the tax

for new home buyers buying new homes. There'd still be a

full property tax on the managed wood lots. As you'll

recall, we brought back the tax rebate to 70% for the

managed wood lots and got rid of the property tax for

conservation lands. I know that when we came to office,

during the campaign the farmers were very concerned

about the farm tax rebate. They thought that was going to

be lost as well, and I'm sure that if the Liberals were in

government today that would have happened to our farmers under

those circumstances.

With all those taxes in place, there'd be no job stimu-

lation whatsoever in this province and obviously the debt

would go up. We know how opposed the Liberals are to

tax cuts and we know that they helped to create an awful

lot of the debt that we have. I'm sure, I'm absolutely

positive, that the deficit would be well in excess of

\$12 billion per year at this point in time.

As we look at it today, three years plus since the elec-

tion, I know the Liberals would have left photo-radar out

there. We'd still have these vans sitting along the 401 and

many of the roads, flashing pictures, as a cash cow, taking

in all kinds of money. They would have been out there

with runaway welfare costs because they wouldn't have

addressed any kind of reform to welfare; it would still be

going on at the same rate. We'd indeed be closer to bank-

ruptcy in this province, with the debt climbing to ever

higher levels with \$12 billion-plus being added to it every

year.

The payroll taxes would still be in place, strangling job

creation. Whether it be the employer health tax or the

corporate taxes, they'd all still be there. There'd have

been no income tax cut to have stimulated the economy,

and I can tell you that has been the greatest stimulation to

our economy that could ever have been brought in. I have

all kinds of quotes here. Time is running too short to get

into those quotes, but they just go on and on for pages and

pages. I know that, as I mentioned earlier, the GST and

the PST would have been harmonized by this point, at

tremendous expense to the people of Ontario. Probably

nothing would have been done about Hydro; they'd still be

wallowing in debt and bureaucracy.

The Workers' Compensation Board would still be

probably the same; wallowing in debt and bureaucracy,

won that election, they wouldn't have addressed the WCB.

We now have the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board,

the chair being Glen Wright. It's been a tremendous turn-

around in my riding office. When I went into that riding

office, the phone was literally ringing off the wall about

problems over WCB. There was just one complaint after

another; it just seemed like we would never get on top of

them. But with the work that the Minister of Labour of the

day did and the work that the Honourable Cam Jackson

did on the WCB, we have made tremendous inroads in

I thought it would be fun to look at what the province would look like had a disaster occurred on June 8 and the Liberals won. But thank heavens that didn't happen. We ended up with a PC government that had the intestinal fortitude to go out and do what we said we would do, and that's exactly what we have been doing for the last three years — doing what we said we would do.

The previous government, the NDP government, brought in studies. I believe it was the Sweeney study — a previous Liberal minister headed that up — that identified that there was too much spending outside of the classroom. We are addressing that and it'll be moving; 60 to 65 cents of each dollar will be spent in the classroom. That's certainly going to be a boon to our students as well as to our teachers. Obviously, some of the administration is not too happy about that.

I'm sure that job creation would never have happened; there would be no job creation in this province. We'd still be going on the same as we had been before, similar to BC out on the Canadian left coast, with no job creation going on there right now; it's going backwards. It's obvious that just because of some international activity it doesn't mean it's going to necessarily happen here.

We'd also be spared the headlines in the Liberal press saying what a mean-spirited government this PC government is. I think if you really look at it, it's a very compassionate government, compassionate for our future generations, that they're not going to be hung with the debt that had been spiralling in this province. We'd also be without hope. We'd know that the pain of the debt that's over our head, the debt that would have been inherited by our children, would never end. It's bad enough now, especially with the federal debt at some \$583 billion and the province over \$100 billion. But it's rounding out, we're doing what is sustainable for our economy and it is indeed going to be much less than it might have been had we not taken the drastic actions we have.

I am going to give you an article that I read. This is from a Mr Bremner, a professor at the school of management, McGill University, Montreal. It says, "How Canada Scores Aways Investors and Talent." This is on the 15% tax cut. It's six months old but it still prevails today:

"In a recent seven-nation study, KPMG Peat Marwick ranked Canada as the lowest-cost Western industrialized country in which to do business. The study ranked Sweden second, Britain third, the US fourth, Italy fifth, France sixth and Germany last.

I am going to give you an article that I read. This is from a Mr Bremner, a professor at the school of management, McGill University, Montreal. It says, "How Canada Scores Aways Investors and Talent." This is on the 15% tax cut. It's six months old but it still prevails today:

Mr Ford: Our friend says, "Thanks to Bill Clinton."

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): Thanks to Bill Clinton.

Yes, in part, but the rest of the provinces across Canada haven't done so well; in other words, they're lagging behind Ontario.

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Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): Thanks to Bill Clinton.

Yes, in part, but the rest of the provinces across Canada haven't done so well; in other words, they're lagging behind Ontario.

Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber): Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen of Ontario, Etobicoke-Humber and Etobicoke Centre, we're going to talk tonight on Bill 15, the Tax Cuts for People and for Small Business Act. I would like to tell you in a round-about way about small business creating jobs and creating enthusiasm across this province.

I went to an academy award presentation the other night at Dixon Grove Junior and Middle School. At the school, they had this graduation class of young people at Kipling Collegiate Institute, in the gymnasium. I know that some of the members in this House speak more than one language. Let me tell you something: At Dixon Grove Junior and Middle School — ponder this for a minute — they speak 84 different languages. I have to give the principal and her staff, Collette Dowhanuk and all her assistants, an academy award for the fact that when you walk into this school, when you walk in the front door, you can feel the enthusiasm. The teachers aren't standing out in the hall talking about problems in the school; they're in their classes talking to students.

I was principal for a day in that school and they took me around. They invited me in to see the school. That was very interesting. I saw them outside at recess. I saw them at noon hour. There was a great deal of respect in that school for the teachers. Not only that, but there was a great deal of respect for the students.

Aside from that subject, Ontario has worked hard over the past three years to put this province back on track, to supply jobs for all these young people that will eventually come into the marketplace. They showed me that these young people had average scores that I don't think anybody in this House could equal in math, sciences — you think it's a joke? Try getting 94% or 98% out of eight subjects — average. You can giggle now.

We have to get back to the benefits of hard work as evidenced by the 370,000 jobs that this government has created since we took office. As a result, Ontario is once again becoming the kind of place we want for ourselves and for our children and their future.

"Unfortunately for Canadians, being a low-cost country does not mean that their economy is competitive or that it is a good place to invest. If low cost is the criterion for investment, why not invest in Newfoundland, land of low incomes and low rents?"

"In October, Canadian Industry Minister John Manley hit upon the more important factors for investment, economic growth and price stability, noting in a speech that a shortage of skilled workers prompts companies to leave Canada. He also noted that although Canada is one of the biggest spenders on education, it experienced the lowest rate of productivity growth among the G-7 countries in the last 15 years, has low research and development spending, and hosts a smaller share of high-tech manufacturing than any other G-7 country.

"The financial markets confirm these observations, as does the performance of the Canadian dollar. The Dow Jones industrial average has more than tripled since 1989, whereas the Toronto Stock Exchange average increased just 70%. After adjusting for the 20% depreciation of the Canadian dollar since 1989, the return on the TSE in US dollars between 1989 and 1997 falls to less than 50%. Much of the small gain in the TSE is based on a recent pickup in commodity prices, reflecting Canada's resource-based economy.

"Meanwhile, the Canadian dollar stays low while the country has record surpluses in the current account of its international balance of payments (whereas the US has continuous deficits). The current account surplus merely reflects the fact that Canada is not a good place to invest, and capital — both top-notch human and financial — is leaving the country.

"One of the main reasons is high marginal tax rates. In Canada's most populous provinces, Quebec and Ontario, the combined marginal income tax burden (federal and provincial) for earners in the \$40,000 range stands at 55%. This punitive rate in fact taxes human capital, as demonstrated by the fact that Canada's best talent leaves the country. A number of CEOs have stated bluntly that they moved from Canada because its high taxes limited their ability to attract talent. As Peggy White, Royal Oak Mines' CEO, says: 'High Canadian taxes made it very hard to attract top-notch talent from outside the country and sometimes even to keep top-notch talent home.'

"The emphasis is on 'top-notch.' Canada can attract the not too ambitious or those denied entry visas to the US. But the 'vital few' — those who can move a company's market value by hundreds of millions of dollars, or, as Michael Jordan, bring a team from oblivion to championship — matter the most. This is the talent that Canada has been losing and fails to attract." What our government is trying to do is to get these people to stay here and bring in new people and bring in new businesses.

1930

"Canada taxes capital gains at approximately 40%, double the US rate for investments held over 18 months. If untaxed, a \$1,000 investment compounding at 20% brings \$1.4 million after 40 years. If that investment is taxed yearly at 20%, the US rate, the owner ends up with around

"With brains and capital moving out of Canada, only finance ministers indulging in political calculations can claim surprise that trade surpluses have not strengthened the Canadian dollar. Nor that low interest rates neither brought about much investment or significant decreases in unemployment (which has been holding at a stubborn 9% to 10%)."

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Who said that?

Mr Ford: Mr Brenner, a professor at the school of management, McGill University, somebody you should talk to, Jim, and he'll tell you all about it.

Interjection

Mr Ford: I realize that. Don't listen to it.

"When businesses decide where to locate in the G-7 countries, they are measuring their ability to attract and retain skilled people to countries whose currencies are expected to be stable." Is our currency stable? "If Canada's labour seems 'cheap,' that's because the authors of the KPMG report are comparing apples and oranges. A recent CIBC Wood Gundy study calculated that Canadian factories are 20% less productive than their US counterparts. It is not surprising that Canadians are paid less.

"The KPMG Pearl Marwick study also celebrates Canada's low land and construction prices. But the price of a building is the present value of anticipated rents. The smaller the after-tax rewards, the smaller the value of the building, and the smaller the value of land and of construction costs.

"Low interest rates are not the issue, either. When there is not much demand for investment, real interest rates stay low" — and that's what we are talking —

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Thank you. Comments and questions? The Chair recognizes the member for St Catharines.

Mr Bradley: Mr Speaker, I would like to request unanimous consent to allow Mr Ford to finish the article if he wants to do that. He was just about to finish, so I'd like to let him do that.

The Acting Speaker: The member for St Catharines has requested unanimous consent to have the member finish his statement. Is it agreed? Agreed.

Mr Ford: Thank you very much. I read these articles because I have a great deal of concern for the people in Ontario and the people in Canada, because we have the ability in this country. I listen to some of the people from up north say: "Where are the jobs? Where are these things?" We have to change our strategy. Anyway, the KPMG report comparing apples and oranges:

"Low interest rates are not the issue, either. When there is not much demand for investment, real interest rates stay low" —

The Acting Speaker: Would you please take your seat. I have a member over here who has a point of order.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I and other members of this assembly can hear what the member is saying, but I notice that the mike isn't working and I want to make sure that people back home can hear the last part of the member's speech, so if we could get his mike going.

The Acting Speaker: That is a point of order, but the technicians are having just a little bit of problem with it. I can see them working frantically. They're doing their best. We'll just have —

Mr Bisson: How about on a point of order I ask for unanimous consent —

The Acting Speaker: Member for Cochrane South, I'm sorry, you're not allowed to get up when the Speaker is standing. You can't have a point of order while I'm standing is what I'm saying.

Mr Bisson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, now that you are sitting: In order to assist in this particular dilemma with the technical difficulties, I would ask for unanimous consent to allow the member to speak at the next seat so that we can allow that mike to work and he can finish the speech.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Cochrane South has asked for unanimous consent to have the member move to another microphone. Is it agreed? Agreed.

Mr Ed Doyle (Wentworth East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe they may have technical problems with the mike in that seat as well. Is that right?

Interjection.

Mr Doyle: He's okay, then? Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Etobicoke-Humber.

Mr Ford: Last but not least, the KPMG report mentions that Canada has the lowest corporate income taxes:

"Since corporations are only a complex association of contracts, any corporate income tax is of consequence only in the sense that investors will evaluate who will pay — consumers in higher prices, employees in lower wages or shareholders. Even low corporate income taxes will be paid only if investors cannot negotiate a better investment deal elsewhere in the world."

This is what I'm talking about when I talk about unions, free enterprise and trying to get the best possible jobs for the unions. I don't criticize them, but they have to understand that we have to be competitive as a country to create those super jobs that the opposition is always talking about.

"Taxes on dividends, on capital gains and on incomes are the issue" — that's what I mentioned — "not the incidence of taxes based on legal entities."

"Some of Canada's provinces, Alberta for example, have cut provincial taxes. In Ontario, the new provincial government tries to dismantle its disastrous fiscal and regulatory inheritance from its predecessor.... But on the federal level, the situation does not seem promising. With no effective opposition, and forecast that next year the federal government may have a surplus in the budget" —

Comments and questions?

1940

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): You can tell that

all the members of the House, including the opposition members, thoroughly enjoyed the dissertation of the member for Etobicoke-Humber, as it was our House leader, Jim Bradley, who asked for unanimous consent to allow the member to finish his article and to finish his speech because we just didn't think there was enough time to do that.

I'd like to comment on one of the last comments the member made, a reference to the fact that we've got to get away from this strife in Ontario. I would say to the members that that's not the history of this province. We didn't use to have all this strife. In fact, I would compliment your own party, that under the leadership of premiers such as Robarts and Davis, they had a sense of governing for everyone in Ontario. Even though they did that in the context of your political party, they still had a sense that they didn't just govern for their supporters. That's very different from the philosophy that your party seems to have adopted today under the leadership of Mike Harris, and very well supported by a lot of your members, which

economy.

Mr Len Wood: Who told you that story, Doug?

Mr Ford: Who told me that story? To repeat, Mr Brenner is a professor at the school of management, McGill University, Montreal.

Getting back to the 15% tax cuts that we were talking about for small business, I went around to every small business — stores, shops — in Etobicoke-Humber and Etobicoke Centre. I went in and introduced myself and this is what they were talking about. People are very concerned about the economy, but some of them are very happy.

I want to thank the opposition for letting me finish my speech.

The Acting Speaker: I'd also like to convey our appreciation to the hardworking staff who resolved the problem. Thank you.

has caused a lot of the strife, because you haven't really taken the attitude that you have to govern for everyone in Ontario.

You mentioned the 84 different languages. We are a very diverse group of people here in Ontario, whatever language we speak. We live in different regions. We all have different economies and different needs and you have to be sensitive to that. I would think this government could go a long way to stopping a lot of the strife if you stop just governing for some people in 905 that you believe are going to get you re-elected and look at the full spectrum of Ontario.

There are a lot of poor people in this province. While the stock market has done very well and a lot of rich people have done very well, there still are a lot of poor people in Ontario and they need the government's support. In a perfect world, maybe that wouldn't be, but it's not a perfect world. I would ask you to govern for everyone in this province.

Mr Len Wood: On Bill 15 we've heard four of the government backbenchers praise the finance minister and the government for all the job creation they're supposed to have done. If we look back and read the newspapers, we find out that because of the extreme growth in the United States, all the jobs in Canada, especially in Ontario, have been created as a result of the growth that has happened in the United States — very low unemployment there and they're buying the products and they're creating jobs within Ontario.

Coming from northern Ontario, we know this government decided they were going to put user fees and taxes on every resident in northern Ontario who owns a car, for example. Because of the long winters and the excessive price of gasoline, northern Ontario residents didn't pay for their licence plates. This government decided they were going to put a tax on every car in northern Ontario of \$37.50. If you look at all the other user fees they've put on, it's contributing to the high unemployment rates we have in northern Ontario now. In my area we have unemployment rates of 20% to 25%; some of the areas are up to 50%. The member for Sault Ste Marie talks about unemployment of 18% or 20%. There are no jobs that have been created.

The jobs that have been created in southern Ontario are a direct spinoff of the good economy happening worldwide, especially in the States. When the recession was over in 1994, when the NDP government was still in office, jobs were created at that time and they've continued. It doesn't matter which government was there. The economy is what creates jobs. It's not as a result of any particular government, especially not Bill 15.

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): It's great to have an opportunity tonight to comment after hearing the speeches of the members for Nepean, York East, Northumberland and the particularly stirring speech from the member for Etobicoke-Humber. I'm sure all the members in the House, plus all the guests in the gallery, tonight join in complimenting him on that great speech.

As well, as I attend various schools and health care facilities in the region and municipal meetings, I'm not hearing what we were told here this evening. I feel like I live in a different province, a different part of the country,

working world of northwestern Ontario.

Again he said no. He said there is no way it's going to be even close, when he adds up all these additional fees he is being forced to pay as he moves from day to day in the working world of northwestern Ontario.

He was talking as well about the registration fee he's paying on his vehicle. These are vehicles he uses for work, along with his own personal vehicle. I said again, "Well, did you not notice your income tax reduction of 30%?"

He said there was no difference on his paycheque, yet he's expected to pay these extra fees. He's expected to pay additional costs. Wait until he gets his municipal taxes this year to find out what the municipal tax rate is going to be in terms of the extra fee.

As one example, Saturday morning I was approached by a mechanic who was telling me about the increases, the quadrupling of fees he's paying to get a licence to practise his trade in the region. I said to him, "God, you must have noticed your 30% income tax reduction," and he told me no. He said there was no difference on his paycheque, yet he's expected to pay these extra fees. He's expected to pay additional costs. Wait until he gets his municipal taxes this year to find out what the municipal tax rate is going to be in terms of the extra fee.

Mr Frank Michals (Kenora): When I listen to the comments from the members for Etobicoke-Humber, Northumberland and Nepean, I often think that maybe I'm living in a different province, because what they're saying here tonight is certainly not what I see in northwestern Ontario.

There's ample evidence over the last three years that tax cuts do create jobs. More important, they don't just create jobs, they create private sector, high-quality, long-lasting jobs, and that is what's good for the whole province of Ontario.

I was in Learnington last night talking to some people at a hospital board meeting. The greenhouse growers in Learnington tell me the single biggest problem they have is that they can't find enough workers. They have tremendous markets for the products they grow; they cannot find enough workers to work in the greenhouses to create those products.

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When we look at job creation and look at Navistar, one of the largest employers in the city of Chatham-Kent, which produces some of the world's greatest highway tractors, it has gone from an employment level of around 400 to up to over 2,000 employees now. They currently have an order board, according to the employees there, higher than it's ever been: somewhere in the vicinity of 20,000-plus trucks they have on order that they haven't built yet.

I was in Learnington last night talking to some people at a hospital board meeting. The greenhouse growers in Learnington tell me the single biggest problem they have is that they can't find enough workers. They have tremendous markets for the products they grow; they cannot find enough workers to work in the greenhouses to create those products.

When we talk about tax cuts and job creation and we

because this is not what the municipal leaders are telling me, not what the nurses are telling me on the front line, not what the hospital administrators are telling me, not what the teachers are telling me. They're not telling me any of this. I wonder where these people are living compared to where I'm living.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Nepean has two minutes to respond.

Mr Baird: I want to thank the members for Timiskaming, Cochrane North, Chatham-Kent and Kenora for their remarks. I want to break away from the norm of responding and just address the comments of the member for Etobicoke-Humber.

I'll tell you, this is a member who knows of what he speaks. He's been there, he's walked the walk and he's created the jobs. I suspect that over this man's lifetime he has created and employed literally hundreds of people in Toronto, and those hundreds of people whom this member has hired have been able to support their families. Why?

Because of entrepreneurship, of willingness to put capital at risk and to work hard to help create those jobs. I salute the member for Etobicoke-Humber.

In his remarks he laid out the facts about what's going to take to create jobs. Many of us spoke about consumer confidence and the terrible effect that high taxes have on consumer confidence. The member for Etobicoke-Humber spoke about the importance of high taxes as a disincentive to investment, and too often we forget that.

When people have to decide where they're going to invest, whether they're going to invest in Ontario or in Michigan or in Manitoba or Quebec, they're going to look at the tax rates. The member for Etobicoke-Humber made a very strong case about why we've got to be internationally competitive with taxes or we're not going to get the investment and create the jobs.

He spoke about the importance of not just creating jobs, but creating good jobs and high-tech jobs and what we're going to have to do to create a skilled workforce. He alluded to some of the measures contained in the budget to try to deal with those skills shortages. He spoke about the new economy and the importance of embracing the cultures here in Ontario and how we exploit that to reach out around the world and help sell Ontario goods and services around the world, to help even more jobs.

I want to salute the member for Etobicoke-Humber and all the jobs he's created over his lifetime and the families that have been able to provide for themselves.

1950

The Acting Speaker: I just wanted to outline the rules. The response is supposed to be to the questions and comments addressed to the speakers.

Mr Michash: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: If those were the rules, why did you allow him to go on for two minutes and not say anything about the comments I made in my two minutes.

Mr Chudleigh: It's not for him to decide.

Mr Michash: He just finished saying it was the rule. Mr Speaker, why did you allow him to go on for two minutes? I ask you that question.

The Acting Speaker: That is not a point of order. Further debate?

Mr Ramsay: I'm pleased to be part of this debate tonight. I'm very pleased that the Minister of Health is here tonight, because I would like to talk to her directly, to —

Mr Bradley: The pamphlet?

Mr Ramsay: Not about the pamphlet necessarily, but I might bring that up. I wanted to talk about the northern doctor situation. Having the minister here I think is very appropriate. I'm glad I have this pamphlet here, because one of the problems with the Harris government administration of health care is that they are quite willing to spend over \$1 million — I think it's \$1.27 million — on this particular pamphlet, sending it out to every household in Ontario, yet I would like to tell the people watching tonight, not only back home but everywhere, that in the largest municipality I represent, the town of Kirkland Lake, by the end of August 50% of the people there will be without a family physician.

It is a town of 11,000. In today's Ontario, which the government members have been touting in their last speeches as a great province and how great business is doing, it's an absolute shame that a town, any town, any citizen of this province be without a family physician. But that's the position we're in, and one of the reasons is the mishmash of incentives and policies that this Minister of Health and the Ministry of Health have in Ontario today.

I'll give you a concrete example of what's happening. Some geniuses in the Ministry of Health decided that they would bring forward an incentive program to help those communities that have seven doctors or less. They decided that for those communities only, in underserved areas, they would allow an incentive program to attract doctors and give them the option, which I think is a great option, of going on salary if they wished. So they offer a salary package of \$186,000, with benefits and with vacation, which I think is fair wages, quite frankly, for a town like that, because a lot of these doctors get burned out.

That's fine, but what's happened is that doctors living in other underserved areas, mid-sized towns in my riding, especially, such as Kirkland Lake, which I just mentioned, and towns like New Liskeard, this program attracts doctors away from these communities to others. We have the absurd notion of one government incentive program stealing from needs in other areas, and I think it's absolutely wrong.

The height of ridiculousness of this particular program is that just 50 kilometres down the road from Kirkland Lake on Highway 11 is the town of Englehart. Englehart has the medical manpower needs of seven and under, and this month they will have a complete complement of doctors there; they'll have their seven. So what's happening is that people 50 kilometres up Highway 11 in Kirkland Lake are now clamouring to be part of the doctors' practice in Englehart. We have the absurd situation now of a lot of elderly people, who have to see doctors more than other folks, going 50 kilometres down the highway to see a doctor. In fact, one of the doctors

from Kirkland Lake went to Englishman Lake to take up that particular program, because if you're a doctor practising in Kirkland Lake or New Liskard or any other mid-sized community or larger in Ontario, you cannot benefit from that incentive program.

I can just imagine, in January and February, when we have some of our worst weather in northern Ontario, a senior couple trying to get to their doctor's appointment having to drive 50 kilometres down Highway 11, risking their lives because of an inept, illogical incentive program that the Ministry of Health has in place to attract doctors to very small communities, and it is doing that at the expense of other communities across the north. That's just ludicrous.

This minister has to have the guts to take on the Ontario Medical Association and say, "I'm going to put doctors in every damned community in this province, whether you guys and gals it like or not." Every citizen in this province deserves to have a doctor, and we should no longer kowtow to medical associations that refuse to put doctors in every part of this province. We're all Ontarians and we all have equal rights, and all Ontarians deserve to have a family physician. It's not right that seniors, families, people who are working have to travel 50 miles or have to go Sudbury, have to go to Toronto to find a doctor.

What's the problem here? Is there a shortage of doctors in Ontario? No, there isn't. There is a maldistribution of doctors in Ontario. Too many doctors want to practise in the Golden Horseshoe area and not enough want to get out to rural medicine. There are a lot of reasons for that. It's not just the north, because I see some of the members from rural Ontario nodding their heads. In Kent and Essex — Windsor is an underserved area. It's unbelievable. It's not just a northern, remote problem; it's a rural problem.

Part of that boils down to how we educate doctors today. We educate them in big city hospitals with all the high-tech machinery and a specialist down the hall, and then we ask them to come to a place like New Liskard, where it's basic, primary medicine. They're extremely independent. They don't have the backups and they don't have the support, and quite frankly we do not prepare them properly to practise in small towns and rural settings. We still in Ontario, by and large, are a community of small towns and rural areas. That's certainly where we have our doctor shortages, and we've got to be developing in our medical programs the proper teaching in the courses so that doctors are prepared to practise in small towns. I think the proper incentives also have to be in place.

We have to ensure that not only do we have good incentive programs there to initially recruit doctors to come to our communities, but because of the harder work they do — they can't just quickly refer a patient down the hall to the oncologist or cardiologist but have to do the primary care themselves, with maybe not the very latest of equipment in a rural hospital — they need to have a higher level of payment than a doctor working in Toronto.

That has to happen, and again that's the minister having to take on the Ontario Medical Association. It's as simple as this: a 0.1% cut on the fee levels or salary levels

That's the type of flexibility we need to have, and we need to have a Ministry of Health and a Minister of Health that would take that on and say to the doctors of Ontario, "We've got to have family medicine service, at least, as a basis in every part of this province." I've been talking about this with many of my colleagues and we, for sure, are going to be coming up with some ideas of how to do this, because it is long overdue that the government finally take some action to do this. We need to be doing that.

Mr Chudleigh: When would that be? When are we going to hear your ideas, David? I am waiting for your idea.

Mr Ramsay: I would say we just put doctors in every community, and that's how we would do it. It just has to happen, and I mentioned that to the member.

Another problem we have in northern Ontario, especially in the region of Timiskaming-Cochrane, through rural northeastern Ontario — when I listen to members from southern Ontario on the government side speak, they wouldn't even understand that in my area there are 4,850 households on telephone party lines. All of us today take for granted that when you pick up the line, you've got a single line, at least one, and you're able to connect not only your fax machines and your answering machines but also hook up your computer and get on the Internet, get on to the e-mail system. Almost 4,900 households in Timiskaming-Cochrane cannot do that. This now is getting way beyond an inconvenience. This is getting way beyond an economic detriment to our area. It's now putting people's lives at risk, because unlike the old days when a party line was tied up, at least you could interrupt the call. Another party could say: "I've got an emergency in this house. We have to call the police. We have to call an ambulance." You can't do that. If somebody hook up on to the Internet on a party line there is no way another party can interrupt that connection, and that is putting people's lives at risk.

2000

I've talked to the Minister of Northern Development about this. It is time that this government in Ontario said: "Every Ontarian should have access to a private line, period. That should happen. That should be the policy." That's the type of policy that would build northern Ontario, would put us on a level playing field.

I see across the way there are a lot of farmers in here, and they know how they use the Internet as a tool to check daily on commodity prices, to get the very latest data on weather, to make those very critical decisions, those business decisions on the farm that's a very big, sophisticated business today. You need those modern tools today. The

farmers in most of northern Ontario are not on a level playing field with the farmers of the south because they don't have access to that very basic connection. It would be nice to have a high-speed data stream. It would be nice to have a lot of other luxuries. What I'm talking about is moving these 4,900 households from the horse-and-buggy era of telephone service to at least maybe close to the Concorde jet type of service of data transmission that we have in southern Ontario.

It's these sorts of inequities that really upset the members from northern Ontario. I see my colleague from

Algoma-Manitoulin is here. My colleague from Kenora who was just here upset with the last comments because they speak of Ontario as a monolith, as if the great affluence that is happening down here in southern Ontario, the great building boom that very much echoes that which happened in the late 1980s, is happening in northern Ontario. Maybe the members say, "Jeez, he keeps harping and they keep harping on that," but this is the area I represent. This is my job down here, to speak to that, to present to the government the facts and the reality of what it's like in northern Ontario today.

There are a lot of reasons for that, but I've given you two areas that you could really tackle, that the government could tackle, in helping the quality of life through the support of family physicians in northern Ontario, and I think making the number one investment for economic development in the north is to make sure that every household has access to a private line. Those are the types of initiatives that I'm talking about now and asking you to do now, because we should no longer have to wait for that. We need the service of our doctors in the north and we need private-line service right across northern Ontario to put us on a level playing field.

That is very important, and I'm glad I've had this opportunity tonight to do that. If I didn't mention it before, I'm going to be sharing this hour with several of our members, and I believe the member for Scarborough-Agincourt is next in line to speak for us.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I hope the people watching at home understand why we have our jackets off. The air-conditioning is not working in here and it's quite warm.

I'm pleased to join the debate on the budget bill, Bill 15. I'll start by commenting on the gambling provisions in the bill. This is perhaps one of the most serious parts of this bill, in that it gives Mike Harris essentially an unfettered right to expand slot machines in Ontario. The government tells us that when this bill is passed it is their intention to introduce 15,000 slot machines right across Ontario. That'll be their first blush of them, that'll be the first number that they put out there — 15,000 machines. Just so we understand what that means, it means that people will lose —

Mr Chudleigh: If that doesn't happen, you will apologize.
Mr Phillips: Mr Chudleigh is barracking, but many of my —

Mr Chudleigh: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I have a riding. The people of Ontario deserve the right to know what my riding is and I think the member is supposed to refer to me by my riding —

The Acting Speaker: Just a moment.

Mr Chudleigh: — not by my surname, as proud as I am of that surname.

Mr Phillips: He's a little touchy, but maybe he's embarrassed about the gambling because certainly when Mike Harris and he ran he said they had no intention of introducing slot machines, and certainly —

Mr Chudleigh: He doesn't know my riding.

Mr Phillips: I hope the people at home can hear Mr Chudleigh barracking over there, because he ran on the platform that said he wouldn't be introducing these slot machines and now we find him here tonight voting in favour of a bill to bring in 15,000 slot machines. And what will the government do with it? They will take —

Mr Chudleigh: And you will apologize if the 15,000 is wrong. You will apologize.

Mr Phillips: Mr Chudleigh doesn't want to hear this, but I think his residents and the constituents want to know that he is supporting 15,000 slot machines. People in Ontario will lose every year in those slot machines, according to the government's own numbers, \$1 billion. People will go into these gambling casinos that Mike Harris is introducing, 15,000 slot machines, and every year they will lose \$1 billion in those slot machines. That will create, without a question of a doubt no one disagrees with that, serious social problems.

We read just today that the province of Alberta is having very serious problems with the video slot machines — they're virtually the same thing as what Harris is introducing here — serious problems with the slot machines. But here we are at 10 after 8 on a late June night with the Harris the authority to introduce 15,000 of these slot machines. Surely we have before us in today's paper the problems that these machines have created in the province of Alberta. Mike Harris is fond of saying that he likes the hardworking people of Ontario to have money, and here we are taking \$1 billion out of the pockets of the hardworking people of Ontario.

I say to the government, is this really what you want to do? We have a police report. The senior police organization in the province looked at this issue, because one of the arguments that we get on this bill is, "We have to legalize slot machines because there are a lot of illegal ones out there and we'll eliminate them." What did the police say about that? The police said clearly in their report:

"It is proven that by legalizing slot machines you do not eliminate illegal gambling and illegal slot machines. In fact in many respects you simply grow the illegal gambling because people first get hooked on legal gambling and then they naturally participate in other forms of illegal gambling."

That's what the police say. That's not me. That's not the Liberal caucus. That is the senior police officers in

Ontario who did a study, requested by the government,

which proved that.

Here we are tonight, ready to push through this bill that

will legalize 15,000 slot machines that Alberta is now

finding create serious, serious problems and is now with-

drawing from many communities, and our own senior

police organizations say, "By legalizing this we are not

eliminating the illegal part of it, we are encouraging it and

embodying it."

Why are we doing it? Why would Mike Harris want to

ram this thing through? He's got to find the money to fund

the tax cut, simple as that. Here's the document supplied

by the Ministry of Finance. It shows that people in Ontario

making \$250,000 a year or more are going to get a total

tax break of \$500 million. That's what this document

shows, that as soon as this bill passes, the total tax break

for people making more than a quarter of a million dollars

in Ontario is \$500 million. Well, Mike Harris has to find

that money somewhere, and where will it come from?

Heavily it will come from these slot machines.

2010

I was interested to hear that the government said,

before they proceeded with this, that there would be a

legislative framework that we would have opportunities to

review. This is the legislative framework, this bill, called

the budget bill. Tucked away in the back is the legislative

framework. It gives the government the authority to pro-

ceed with these 15,000 slot machines. I just say to the

members of the Conservative caucus that many people in

the province of Ontario believed you when you said, "We

don't believe in gambling." Mike Harris said he doesn't

want to touch gambling money. But here we have a bill

that the government's own figures show will take

\$1 billion a year out of people's pockets to go into slot

machines, and we understand why. The government has to

fund the tax cut. So that's one part of the bill I wanted to

comment on.

The second part of the bill is the income tax cut. I was

interested to see in the budget what has happened to the

debt of the province. There's an interesting chart here on

pages 56 and 57, which you would be familiar with. When

Mike Harris became Premier, the debt of the province of

Ontario was \$88 billion. The budget document shows

now, four years later, the debt of the province, according

to the government's own figures, is up by \$22 billion. So

the debt of the province has gone up from \$88 billion by

\$22 billion. Yet we have been able to fund a tax cut that

over the last three years has meant a loss of revenue to the

province of approximately \$12 billion. That's been the

lost revenue as a result of the tax cut.

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister

responsible for native affairs): Nonsense. What non-

sense.

Mr Phillips: The Attorney General is saying, "What

nonsense" but I would just say —

Hon Mr Harnick: Why don't you say how many jobs

have been created? Why don't you say that we are now

one of the most competitive jurisdictions?

Mr Phillips: I'm pleased the Attorney General is here, because it is to the Attorney General that I have on several occasions said that you, the government, had in its possession a document that proves that it was a provincial gov-

Hon Mr Harnick: What nonsense. You don't tell the

truth. You twist everything you say.

Mr Phillips: — that found a burial ground at Ipper-

wash Provincial Park. It was a provincial government

engineer, during the construction of that park in 1937, who

found the burial ground. That was why —

Hon Mr Harnick: What does that have to do with the

deficit? You just switch from one thing to another to

another to another.

Mr Phillips: The Attorney General, the public should

realize, is in here barracking and hollering on a budget bill

when he will not look in his own file to prove that there

was a burial ground at Ipperwash. It was the government's

own files that proved that it was a government engineer

that found the burial ground and you will not even look in

your own files to find it.

I say to the public, the reason one gets angry here with

Premier Harris is that a first nations person was killed as a

result of a confrontation at Ipperwash Provincial Park, and

there was a file produced by the government itself, from

the government's own records, that showed that it was a

provincial government engineer that found that burial

ground during the construction of the park. It was —

Hon Mr Harnick: Not true.

Mr Phillips: He says it's not true and now we want the

Attorney General to prove that.

The Acting Speaker: Order. I would ask the Attorney

General to withdraw that remark, please.

Hon Mr Harnick: Withdrawn.

Mr Phillips: The reason I'm dealing with the subject is

that we are dealing with a bill that authorizes Mike

Harris's budget. That's what this bill does. It gives Mike

Harris the budget to run his cabinet office. It gives Mike

Harris the budget to run his office.

One key question that is on our minds for which we

cannot get an answer from the government is, "What

happened at Ipperwash?" One thing is clear: The govern-

ment had in its possession a letter, written from the federal

government to the provincial government, saying it was

the government's own engineer, during the construction of

Ipperwash Provincial Park, who said to the first nations:

"I have found a burial ground during my construction. My

suggestion to you is, why don't you request the provincial

government to fence off that burial ground and have it

protected?" The first nations said, "All right, that is a

good idea." They passed a resolution. They sent it to the

federal government, and the federal government sent it to

the provincial government, saying, "It was your own

engineer that found that."

The reason I spend the time on it is because that is a

part of Ipperwash, the fact that there was a provincial

government engineer that found the burial ground and we

could not even get the Premier to agree to look in the files

to confirm that they did anything about that. The reason I

raise it is that the Attorney General has chosen to come into the House tonight and to participate in this debate by heckling. Before he heckles, I suggest that he instruct his own government to look in those files. He is the minister responsible for native affairs. He has the responsibility to deal with the first nations and he is abdicating that responsibility.

Back to the gambling issue, which is part of this bill, where our own senior police officers have said: "By legalizing slot machines you are not going to eliminate the illegal ones. In many respects, you are simply going to expand them." Yet here we are with a bill tonight designed to give the government the authority to implement 15,000 of these slot machines.

On the tax cut I would simply say that the debt of the province, according to the government's own figures, since Mike Harris became Premier has gone up \$22 billion. The tax cut has cost \$12 billion. I say to the people of Ontario, frankly, every penny of that cut we have had to go and borrow that money. We borrowed \$22 billion, and \$12 billion is as a result of the tax cut. These are the government's own numbers.

I come from a business background. There's no business in the province of Ontario that could go to its bank when it's running a deficit and then —

Interjections.

Mr Phillips: There they are heckling again because they don't like the message. They don't like to hear the fact that they ran on a platform of no slot machines and they're bringing the slot machines in. They don't like to recognize that every single penny of this tax cut is borrowed money.

I understand the need to balance budgets. I understand that. But tell me again, how can we afford to spend \$500 million on a tax cut for people who are making more than \$250,000 a year when we cannot afford —

Mr Baird: The red book had Gerry's fingerprints all over it.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Nepean, you had your turn to debate and now you'll give that turn to Mr Phillips: I realize that the Attorney General might not want to hear about Ipperwash. I realize that it is a major black eye on the province of Ontario and the fact that he is the native affairs minister and refuses to even investigate the file on whether there is a burial ground at Ipperwash. The reason I raise it is because you want authority and money to fund the tax cut, but you're not prepared to deal with the essential issue of what happened at Ipperwash on that fateful night.

I am pleased to participate in the debate on the budget to say that the public should be aware of the gambling provisions in this bill, gambling provisions that Mike Harris said he would not implement before the election and now is implementing, and the provisions on the tax cut, and again I say every penny of the tax cut — we are still running significant deficits — is borrowed money. I understand many people in the population of Ontario appreciate and like the tax cut, but I'm not sure that many

realize that every single penny of it we have had to go out and borrow in order to fund it. As I said before, it's essentially trying to bribe people with their own money.

So we are here tonight, and I would raise one final issue that I raised the other day and I'll personalize this a little bit. There was an issue that I raised with the Minister of Health nine months ago. There was an individual in the area I represent who was 30 weeks pregnant who went to a local hospital — a terrific local hospital, I might add — and had a brain haemorrhage. The hospital then went to a service called Crittall, which made 21 phone calls attempting to get that individual a bed to handle neuro-surgery in the greater city of Toronto. There was nothing available. That individual then found a bed in Hamilton. They could not get an air ambulance and that individual then was transported by land and tragically passed away.

The reason I raise that is, first, it's been nine months and I still do not have an answer on whether steps have been taken to prevent that from ever happening again. But there's no question that the hospitals in Metropolitan Toronto have had their budgets cut. They have been strapped, their resources strapped, and yet we can still afford a tax cut that gives people making a quarter of a million dollars a \$500-million tax break a year. That's what we're dealing with in this bill. I just wonder where our priorities are.

2020

Mr Sean G. Conway (Kentrew North): I want to join the debate tonight for a few moments. I want to start where the previous member, Mr Phillips, left off and talk a bit about the health care situation. This is a budget bill covering the waterfront of government appropriations and revenue generation. I want to simply say that, as my colleague from Agincourt makes plain, most hospitals in the province have seen their budgets cut in real terms. In my area we have the only facility that has actually been closed, and some of you have heard me talk about this in recent days.

The thing surprises many of us is that the government has been making much of new announcements. Certainly the health budget is a multibillion-dollar budget — \$18.6 billion. There has been no small effort made by a number of interest groups to try to track the money. It does appear that hundreds of millions of dollars have been appropriated but not yet spent.

But let me talk to the House tonight about what happened and what is happening in many hospital centres across the province. I will use Pembroke as a good example. When I look at what the Health Services Restructuring Commission has ordered, they ordered the closure of the nearly century-old Pembroke Civic Hospital. Those doors are shut, the windows boarded up and in fact the building has been sold. It's a very, very attractive building in the heart of my home city, Pembroke, and I'm going to tell you there is no little bit of anger about the decision and the rapidly at which it was implemented. We've got a hospital closed in Pembroke.

Yes, there will be reinvestments, but the fact of the matter is that when you look at the calculations that are

try, but I want to get to that in a moment — our city of Pembroke and area will lose, after all of the reinvestments are calculated and in place — and it will be several years to come before it's all in place — we are going to have in Pembroke the net loss on an annual basis of between \$6.5 million to \$7 million — gone permanently.

When I look at London, Ottawa, Windsor, Hamilton, Sudbury and Thunder Bay, it is virtually the same in all communities. I was saying to some of my colleagues the other day that this is like a saucer, with the 905 area, the Metro belt, being the one part of the saucer into which additional money is draining in net terms. Everywhere else along the course of the saucer wall is in fact losing money. People have this notion that if you lose \$10 million, you're going to get \$10 million of reinvestment. That's not true. In my area we're probably going to get — I haven't got the material in front of me, but I'm going to guess — not more than 30 cents of the dollar reinvested in our community. Millions are coming out of the Pembroke area and going down to Aurora, Georgetown, Pickering, Newmarket and Whitby. The same will be happening, money will be draining out of Chatham, Windsor, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste Marie and Toronto into the Metro belt. When people say the reinvestment is there, don't think for a moment that the reinvestment is going to be made dollar for dollar in your home community. I'm quite astonished at how much money we are losing in my community, for example.

The other thing that has really astonished me in recent days is that when I talked to hospital officials who have had to deal with the Health Services Restructuring Commission, they thought, like I did, that once the commission came in and made an order it had the effect almost of a court. Well, that's not true at all, particularly where the Ministry of Health is concerned. It's absolutely clear, and nowhere more so than in Pembroke where we've got a Ministry of Health to accept, apparently, all of the funding implications of the decision. The board at the Pembroke General and certainly the senior administration, with whom I met 10 days ago, were perplexed, to be polite — I could use other language — to find out that they are swimming in a sea of red ink and there does not seem to be any willingness on the part of the Ministry of Health to accept the dictates of the commission.

My colleague the member from Lanark appeared with a cheque in hand the other day, saying, "I've got \$1 million." Yes, they got \$1 million, which is going to be applied against their \$1.1-million operating deficit, to say nothing of their restructuring costs of \$2.5 million to \$3 million already incurred. I would just be stupefied if I were on that board, thinking: "Where are we in this? I thought that if we closed the one hospital at the very least money." One of my hospitals — the only one now — the Pembroke General, has an operating line of credit now beyond anything they've ever had in their 100-year his-

tory, and they're wondering when they are going to see the end of this red ink that was not of their making.

Pembroke is a small, regional city. When one gets into Ottawa, when one gets into Toronto and London, I can imagine what the implementation pains and costs are going to be.

I know that as we head closer to the election the Minister of Health and all her happy camper friends on the treasury bench will be the most busy and best-paid postmen and postwomen in Ontario. They will be going from Listowel to Little Current, from Petrolia to Pefferlaw with a cheque in hand to say, "My, my, it's now Christmastime," in the middle of September or the end of November. There will be a rain of government money. I am sure, as we head into the last part of this mandate. But I want to make it very plain: The evidence could not be clearer that the government does not appear to accept the financial implications of decisions ordered by the Health Services Restructuring Commission.

I wish no harm to people in communities like Ottawa, Toronto and Thunder Bay. My friends and neighbours in Pembroke, and I'm one of them — I look every day out my window and I can almost see the Pembroke Civic Hospital boarded up. Yes, my friend from Oxford strongly observes a thumbs up. You come to Pembroke and do that. You just come and do that. I'll tell you, you'll be needing the big cheese of Ingersoll behind which to hide.

The point I want to make here is, what do we hear? I heard Jane Pepin this morning on CBC Radio talking about Jane Valley is that health services are not getting better. They may, but it is chaos at the present time. I was talking to some people at the Renfrew Victoria Hospital the other day. The Pembroke Civic Hospital closed about eight or nine months ago. I'm told that the emergency room activity at the Renfrew Victoria Hospital is up over that period by something like 20% to 25%, and the clinical activity in that hospital in Renfrew is up by almost the same percentage. Talk to my doctor and my nursing friends in places like Ottawa and certainly one gets the very same impression. There is a very real worry that we've made the cuts, we've shut the door on certain facilities, we've gotten rid of many of the providers.

2030

Yes, we've committed to some new resources. As I say, in my community we are supposed to get some new mental health services and we are going to get some new rehabilitation services, and those will be very, very well received. I can't imagine, given the financial situation at the Pembroke General Hospital today, how they are going to be

parents, made a very good offering, very attractively priced to my entire generation. So for my generation — we who got it for nearly free in the late 1960s and early 1970s — now to stand up and say to our kids, "The sky's the limit," is the alpha and the omega of hypocrisy.

I find it really offensive that in so much of this debate we hear so many people just saying, "Let the kids" — that's who we're talking about basically, the 18- to 25-year-olds — "let the 18- to 25-year-olds pay tuition that's going up four, five and six times the annual inflation rate." I'm not here to argue a position of students not making a contribution. I like to think my position on this is not unreasonable. The last time we debated this, colleagues were reminding me that I as minister raised tuition, and of course I did. But I just simply say that in the last three or four years we've raised university tuition in this province by something in the order of 50% and, I repeat, it's going up now annually four, five and six times the annual rate of inflation. I think that is not acceptable and not fair.

I say to the university and college presidents, whether they are at Western or Laurier or Carleton or Ryerson, you better understand that there is going to be, yes, pressure exerted on this Legislature for additional resources, but there is going to be a very real pressure on the institutions — and I'm not just talking about the administrators; I'm talking about the professors and others — to justify the way in which those resources currently allocated are being spent.

It came as a big surprise a few years ago to some in the university administration community, apparently, that many young people at the undergraduate level expected that there might actually be some kind of an emphasis on teaching. Can you imagine? Some young person from Millbank, north Perth, home of one of the great universities and administrators, the late principal from Queen's University, Dr. Corry, who came out of your part of the world, Mr. Speaker — and I'll tell you, he had something to say about some of these issues.

I want to conclude by saying I just hope all of us, as legislators, as parents, as community leaders, have some sensitivity to what message we are sending out to young people. I include the university presidents. Part of the reason I picked on Mr. Davenport is that I kept hearing the radio and television reports, which almost sounded gleeful, that university presidents seem to be so much on the side of increased tuition. I hope we have some room and some sensitivity for young people who are being asked to pay for this burden. I certainly did not intend, and I want to make plain to Mr. Davenport that I did not have any cause, to suggest that there was some particular nefarious activity going on at Western. But I say in conclusion that as a student I would want to see a rigorous audit of all post-secondary institutions just to see what kind of cost structure and what it is I was being asked to pay for before my tuition was cranked up yet again.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for St. Catharines.

Mr. Bradley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity. What see in this bill is that the government would

All of that is having a clear impact on health services for people in this province and community who have a right to expect quality services when and where they require them. I thought it was remarkable chutzpah for my colleague from Lanark to come, cheque in hand last week, saying, "Aha, \$1 million." Yes, \$1 million towards a deficit of \$3.5-million to \$4 million, most of which is a restructuring deficit.

The second point I want to make concerns the university question, and I've only got a few more minutes because my colleague from St. Catharines is going to break his customary after-dinner silence and opine on subjects of government advertising and the like. I want to pick up on some remarks I made in the House about a month ago. It was May 14 this past year. When on a debate about post-secondary education I expressed some rather strong views, which I certainly maintain, about where we are leaving young people and the kind of message we are leaving. I must say that in those remarks of May 14 I said some rather strong things about, among others, the University of Western Ontario, and Mr. Paul Davenport, the president of the University of Western Ontario, was on the phone expressing some concern about some of what I said. I simply want to say to President Davenport and anyone else who might have read those remarks that — let me be very clear — if I were a student today I would not volunteer to pay one additional red cent to any of the universities in this province without a good, thorough audit of the cost basis of those institutions. I didn't mean to suggest — and this is where I do think I need to clarify the record — in the remarks of May 14 that there was something particularly nefarious going on at the University of Western Ontario.

What I had in mind was a number of audits that have been done by, among others, the auditor general for Ontario who has gone in recent years to look at certain of our post-secondary institutions, and he has found some very interesting things. I look elsewhere in the country, I look at the United States and, boy, do I see some spending patterns at universities, big and small, public and private, that would make me want to — as I said a moment ago, if I were a student, I would say, "I'm not paying one more red cent until I see a very clear picture of how it is you, University X or College Y, are spending the money you've now got, both from government and from me as a student."

I say that because we are now expecting young people to shoulder a growing cost of higher education at the very time we say, out of the other side of our mouth, that at no time is higher education more important to the individual's social and economic wellbeing. To repeat what I said on May 14, what angers me most, especially if you're my age — almost 47 — is that I got a university education — almost free because people like Mr. Roberts and Mr. Davis, responding to pressure I suppose from people like my

exult the virtues of the tax cut at a time when we are still running a deficit in the province and most conservative-minded and cautious individuals would be saying to us that the time to implement any tax cuts is after you have solved the problem of the deficit. In other words, most would say that once you're running a surplus, there is some justification to look at selected tax cuts in specific areas.

What we have seen, however, is that while the government is running this deficit it has had to borrow money in order to finance the tax cut. Then it is critical of other levels of government, particularly the federal level of government, and says it wants more money. The federal government looks at Ontario and says, "Any money we would give to Ontario they would simply give away in a tax cut," which we all know benefits the wealthiest people in the province to the greatest extent. If you're the president of a bank, for instance, you're getting to get the most back out of this tax cut.

What I want to point out is that what the tax cut is doing is driving far deeper cuts than even many members of the Conservative caucus anticipated would happen. In the Niagara region there are five hospitals which are threatened with some kind of drastic action, either closure or something close to closure, and people have turned out in the thousands to defend those hospitals: in Fort Erie, where we have Douglas Memorial Hospital; in Port Colborne, where we have the Port Colborne hospital; the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital group out there in Grimsby, where the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital is located, a large group of people out for a candlelight meeting; in St Catharines, the Hotel Dieu Hospital; in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Niagara-on-the-Lake General Hospital, all of these under siege from Mike Harris. Mike Harris, you will all recall, said during the last election campaign, "Certainly, Robert" — he was referring to Robert Fisher from Global TV, who asked the question — "I can guarantee you it is not my plan to close hospitals." And yet, 35 hospitals in this province have closed or have been forced to merge, despite the fact the Premier gave a solemn promise that would not happen.

There are some who buy into this crackpot realism that somehow we must punish ourselves for having a good health care system, that somehow we must tear down the hospitals which have served us so well in years gone by and which continue to serve us, that somehow we must instead of simply the need of that person in terms of health, will dictate the kind of service that person is going to get.

The Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines has been designated by the local health care restructuring commission for closure. I can tell you that it will not close easily. I will stand shoulder to shoulder with the people who wish to keep the Hotel Dieu Hospital open, as I will with the people who wish to keep the St Catharines General Hospital open, because

We need all of those hospitals to serve the people of our community. What we need are more beds available, not fewer beds available. What we need is a situation where you're not kicking people out of the hospital quicker and sicker, but rather allowing them to stay in until such time as they are in appropriate medical condition to leave.

The people who are involved with home care or who have people coming home will tell you they're coming home requiring a lot of extensive and comprehensive service, medically speaking. They are unable to obtain that because there's insufficient money for home care. In any event, it's difficult to deliver that kind of care in the home setting.

Our long-term-care facilities are certainly in need of appropriate funding. Linhaven in St Catharines is going to have to lose some of its resources and some of its staff because of cutbacks that are taking place in terms of the operating funding. What we don't need is a cut; what we need is an increase.

When they went to the local commission — it was headed up by Rob Welch, who was a respected regional councillor in St Catharines, son of the Honourable Robert Welch, who we all know served with distinction the riding of Lincoln and then Brock and then St Catharines-Brock in his years in this House. Rob Welch and his commission were left with the unenviable task of having to come up with a program or a plan for medical care services in our area that would be based on the fact that there'd be \$43 million taken out of the system. That is \$43 million taken away from hospital operating budgets. You can imagine then that the recommendations that are going to come forward are going to reflect that unfortunate reality.

It's what I call crackpot realism. Some people buy into it, some people who think they are the intelligentsia like to buy into this, as though somehow this is really clever that somebody has thought of this. They are often people who can afford to purchase their own services about 35 miles away, or 15 miles away, in Niagara Falls or Buffalo in the United States where they can purchase medical services.

We see of course the ambulance services responsibility being dumped on the local municipality. My fear there is we'll see widespread privatization, that Rural/Metro from the United States, which charges huge rates in western New York, will move into Ontario and want to charge the same kind of rates and operate looking at profit as being most important because it is a private sector company. There is a place for the private sector. I don't expect the government to get into the automobile manufacturing business; that's for the private sector. It seems to me, however, that the delivery of health care services is best undertaken by those in the public sector.

The neo-cons, the 20-somethings who get elected to this House and have all the answers and think that you should privatize everything and that the health care system they have in the United States is somehow transferable here, that group does not persuade me with their arguments.

We have fewer nurses in the hospitals today. Ask anybody who goes into a hospital today to compare it to 10

years ago. They'll tell you the service is not the same. The hospitals are not as clear, the kinds of services that are provided, not only medical but non-medical, are simply not what they were just five or 10 years ago. I don't care whether hospital administrators get up after firing 225 people out the door, and that's because they've lost the funding, but after having those people laid off, saying, "Oh, we can do just as good a job." There isn't anybody who believes it, nor should they, because that is simply not the case.

When I hear people talk about the tax cut in my area, most of them will say, "I wish to heck the government would keep that, help to pay off the deficit, but better, keep our health care system going in this province as it should."

We have hospitals in the Niagara region that are running deficits. Of course the local Tory member comes with the big cheque and the local media cover it, the Conrad Black press covers it, as though it's some huge announcement. It's the old story of, they kick you in the face and then come along later and kick you in the shins and you say, "Thank you for just kicking me in the shins this time." They come back with a little bit of money after taking a lot of money out of the system.

Mental health services are almost a disaster in the Niagara region because of lack of appropriate services available to those who are suffering from mental afflictions. We have the psychiatric hospital now closing in Hamilton, and that will put greater pressure on it. We've had the restructuring commission show up in St Catharines, or, as I call it, the Ontario Mike Harris hospital destruction commission because they're coming in looking at ways of cutting money out of the system. Instead of investing and making the system better, they are interested in cutting. Their mandate is to cut, cut, cut. We have in the Niagara region the largest proportion of population per capita of people 55 years of age and over, and they want to start cutting.

Dr David Foot, author of Boom, Bust and Echo, when he spoke at Brock University, was asked by a student, "If you could give one piece of advice to Mike Harris, looking at the demographics of the Niagara region, what would it be?" He said, "Don't close hospitals." What do they want to do? Close five hospitals in the Niagara region. The people of our area will not stand for that. I'm not going to wait for any restructuring commission; I'm not going to look so-called objectively at any restructuring commission. I know we need those hospitals and we don't need Mike Harris's hospital destruction commission to come in and start slamming the doors on our hospitals. You've got lots of money for certain things. You've got money for advertising. Every person in Ontario should know when this pamphlet arrives at his or her house, a propaganda pamphlet trying to extol the virtues of Mike Harris and his government in the field of health care, that it cost \$1.27 million. So when it arrives at your house, ladies and gentlemen, this cost you \$1.27 million. It comes with a lot of other pamphlets that have been showing up lately, or this obscenity, which is of course a full-page ad,

2050

tion and you denounced that."

Last, I'm going to touch briefly on education. I have not seen, in the education system, morale as low as it is today. That need not be the case, but it is. People who are retiring today are retiring not at the end of the year that they're eligible to retire; they're retiring on the day they can retire. So much of that is because they feel besieged by this government, attacked by this government, put down by this government. I know it sounds good when you go to a certain meeting and the anti-education crew applaud you wildly and say, "It's time you put those educators, those trustees, those teachers, those administrators in their place." But I'm going to tell you, you've done almost irreparable damage to our education system. You've kicked the stuffing out of the morale that people in the front line of the delivery of education services have in this province. For that you will never be forgiven.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): My colleagues on this side of the House always speak with wisdom and experience. They bring to the debates of this

has been done about it.

You see, what annoys people is when they see that

you've got money for self-serving propaganda for the Conservative Party, such as this pamphlet that's arriving in every household in Ontario, or for full-page ads such as

this, they wonder why you don't have money for essential health care services in this province.

There's so much in this bill that is worrisome. One is the fact that hidden in this bill is the acquiescence to gam-

bling in this province, the permission which allows Mike Harris to establish the 44 new Mike Harris gambling

halls, or charity casinos as he would prefer to call them, that will operate seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365

days a year if possible — probably a few days less than that. These will operate and they will bleed from local

communities all of the discretionary money that's there. If you think local businesses are going to benefit from this,

you're wrong, because they're not going to have the money to spend on other services. Most of the Conserva-

tive caucus knows I'm right in saying this. I think the crime commissioners, the family coalition people who ran

on family values, instead of trying to get into the cabinet, should be standing up to Mike Harris saying: "Mr Harris,

this is not right. You were right when you were in opposi-

House the sorts of thoughts and comments that all of us ought to listen to well. When we talk about government advertising, when we talk about the kinds of issues that my colleague from St Catharines has pursued, we essentially talk about priorities. What are the priorities of government?

In my community, like his, we've seen two hospitals closed; we've seen beds cut; the emergency room at Hotel-Dieu Grace is backed up; the emergency room at Windsor Regional is backed up; yet this government has money for advertising — cheap political propaganda. All of us in this House have an obligation to talk about priorities and what they mean for us and what they mean for this province.

It's most unfortunate that as we proceed through this year we see more and more advertising. First it came from the Premier's office, Ontario Jobs, then it was "We're on the right track," now it's health care and next we're told it's going to be crime. We're told there was quite a rough-

up at the Ministry of the Solicitor General over a \$400,000 budget cut that had to be restored for what the senior public servants called blatant partisan political advertising using taxpayers' dollars.

When my colleague from St Catharines speaks of these matters, it's important that the government members listen, because we think if there's money for that kind of political propaganda, there ought to be money to keep hospitals open; there ought to be money for more nurses; my colleague, as always.

Mr Martin: In this couple of minutes I want to say that I agree with the presentation that was made tonight by the Liberal caucus, the number of them who spoke. They certainly have put on the record some of the very important things that we need to be saying here in these dying hours of this session of this Legislature: talking about the advertising that is now happening, for example, to sugar-coat, to cake over, to gloss over some of the very draconian pieces of legislation that have come forward, some of the ways that communities have been hurt in a major and significant and fundamental way by this government, whether it's in health care or education, the economies of some of those communities.

I think very specifically of my own community, where we're now experiencing a 20% unemployment rate. The system is beginning to fray at the edges and the Liberal caucus and the New Democratic Party caucus are noticing that. The government caucus, I'm not sure whether it's that you're ignoring it or that you just don't see it, but you're certainly not talking about it. If you don't talk about it, your constituents are going to begin to notice and they're going to tell you very clearly, come the election, in spite of, as the member from Kenfrew has very articulately said here this evening, the largesse that you will come to them with as we move ever closer to the election that will happen within the next year or so. They will have felt personally in their own life, in the life of their families, in the life of their friends and neighbours, in the communities where they live, the full negative impact of some of the

initiatives that you have sprung on them and put in place to bulldoze over them, and they will be very clear in their judgement. You have a short period of time left. The largesse won't do it. Perhaps a repeal of some of the legislation that you've brought into place —

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Carroll: I just want to comment on one thing that the member for Renfrew North made reference to. He talked about being 47 years old and when he went to university — I think I'm using his terminology — basically it was free. He was referring to the excessive cost of Renfrew North but not substantially older. Obviously the price went down dramatically between the time I went and the time he went because I have to tell you, mine was not basically free.

To put it in perspective, when I left university after three years with my degree, I owed \$4,000 at the bank for my university education. My first job teaching school produced an income of \$2,800 a year. If we can translate that into today's numbers, a first-year teacher would get about \$30,000 a year, and to owe the same relative amount as I did, they'd owe about \$42,000 for a three-year education. I don't believe the record would show that in fact is what students coming out of three years' university do owe today. I think, relatively speaking, the cost of university today for students is a bargain relative to the incomes they can generate.

Mr Michash: It's always a pleasure to comment on the speeches made by the members from Scarborough, St Catharines and Renfrew North. As we know, they are three of — I can't call them the older members of the House, but the more experienced here in the House, and it's always the information they bring forth to the House that I look forward to.

In terms of the member from Scarborough bringing up a touchy subject, I think it's going to be a subject that is going to bring harm upon this government as we get closer to the facts, as we get further into it, as we find out more about what some of the commissioners out there are saying, that being the subject of Ippertwash. I know a good number of constituents in my riding are watching this very closely. After meeting with a grand chief this morning and listening to some of their comments, I think it's concerning some real concern and I think it's concern that will resurface in this House more than once in the upcoming session. So I recognize him for those comments.

In terms of the member for St Catharines, he talked about the democratization in education. Well, ladies and gentlemen, I was an educator 11 years ago and whenever I go back into a school, into a classroom or talk to colleagues who I taught with some 11 years ago, I hear it every single time I speak to them. They are demoralized. They are leaving the classroom not because they want to but because of the circumstances they are facing that the Hart's government has put on each board of education in Ontario.

All you have to do is travel throughout the northwest, talk to the people in the new board created around Kenora,

talk to the teachers who retired. I have retirement letters to that board from a good number of them saying that they cannot put up with the political garbage they are faced with today. They didn't leave the classroom because they didn't like what they were doing; they left the classroom because they were fed up. They're telling me there's no way I would ever walk back into a classroom that I left 11 years ago and recognize education as we had it in this province at one time.

The Acting Speaker: The member for St Catharines has two minutes to respond.

Mr Bradley: I appreciate the comments of each of the speakers. In wrapping up for us and responding for us, I would mention to you that not only is the cost of tuition rising substantially, but keep in mind that it is now going to be deregulated. So the sky will be the limit at many of the universities out there, and special programs, which are expensive programs, will cost even more. That's okay if you're the son or daughter of a wealthy person, but for those of modest incomes, that's going to be very difficult for that person to attain, keeping in mind that those are the people who often don't have access to the good jobs. They don't have the special connections. They're not somebody's son or daughter who has these special connections with the big shots in a company or the big shots in government. Often the people who are the wealthiest are the people who are able to get the very best jobs because of those good connections.

Second, remember that you have ended rent control in this province, I say to the member for Chatham-Kent. Rent control is now gone and those who are the most mobile are going to be those who are affected, because when they leave the apartment, when they leave the rental accommodation, the landlord is allowed to hike it. The sky is the limit when that happens. I can tell you, that's going to hurt students very, very much.

2100

I look at the fact that they have the textbook fund. I would like to have been able to stand in the House and compliment the government on the textbook fund and say, "That's a good investment." But instead of doing it right, they had to rush it so all the Tory members could show up and get their photograph taken at the school. Everybody's talking about how you've botched this. It's a good idea. For once I wanted to say something good about the government, and you've botched the idea because you want to rush into it. You want to get all those American-made books on to the shelves of the various schools in this province. That is what has happened now. It's just unfortunate that you're mismanaging even the things which could potentially be good.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Dovercourt.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): Tony, tell him about the books.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): You want to talk about books? We can talk about books. Remind me, I'll talk about books.

If people who have been watching tonight have heard members talk about very many things, it's because this bill is really at the heart of what the fiscal agenda of the Mike Harris government is all about. We have seen a situation in which the government, however they have couched their promises and whatever they are telling us or want people to believe about their promises on health care, where they said they would maintain funding — they've made significant cuts to education, where they said they would maintain the level of funding in the classroom and have cut to the tune of about \$1 billion.

In any of the other areas where the Tories would like the public to believe they are keeping their promises, the one area that I will say to them they are keeping their promise in is with respect to the income tax cut. I have always said from the beginning — and I have said this from the beginning, even when people would not believe it — that of all the promises Mike Harris made, the one and only promise he would really be sure to keep was the one about the income tax cut, not because of the reason Mike Harris and the government members give for that, which is that they believe this is going to create the jobs out there, but because what this income tax cut does is redistribute money and wealth in this province like nothing that's ever been done by a government in the history of this province before.

What this does, essentially, is put the government in a position where they have to borrow, over the life of the government, about \$30 billion that they are adding to the debt to fund this income tax cut, an income tax cut that is going to benefit largely those who are the most well off in this province. It's interesting, when you look at the breakdown of the income of people across this province, half of the taxpayers of the province make less than \$33,000. Yet of the total value of the tax cut, which is around \$5.5 billion, that 50% of taxpayers ends up, at the end of the day, receiving less than 18% of the value of that tax cut. The large proportion of the income tax cut goes to a small percentage of people making over \$80,000, which is 6% of taxpayers across this province. They are the ones who receive a huge benefit. In fact, the top 3% of income earners get 18% of the value of the tax cut.

There is very clearly a redistributive approach going on here, and the money is being redistributed, quite frankly, from Ontarians of modest and low income to Ontarians of

ment is very tiny and is this government really interested in listening?

Of course we know they're not, because you only have to hear the Premier as he gives us the benefit of his presence once a week here in the House. He comes in and seems to destroy all efforts to try to give a softer image, Harris' world, things are getting better when in fact we have a higher level of poverty, particularly around single parents, than we had three years ago, when we see the gap between the richest citizens in Ontario and the poorest citizens in Ontario getting wider, all he can do is rhyme off the various achievements of the government, if he even does that, or he answers questions that were asked before.

2110

The fact is that there are no good answers that this Premier or this government has, because the only reason, essentially, they are proceeding with their agenda is not that they believe — maybe they do believe that this is going to improve the situation; if they do, then they are just wrong — but I think they know that what is key and what is at the heart of what they are doing is to change the balance within Ontario to ensure that at the end of the day most people are not going to be better off.

I think most people out there, if you ask them and if you listen to them, even if they agree that some cutting has to happen, would say to you that it doesn't make a lot of sense. It doesn't make any sense, common or otherwise, for us to be cutting in health care to pay for the income tax cut. It doesn't make any sense for us to be cutting out of our education system to pay for the tax cut. That's the fundamental problem this government has at the end of the day: They can't sell their message, because their message is anything but common sense.

As I was saying as I began — and I'm going to conclude, because I should have said at the outset that I'll be sharing this limited time with my colleague the member for Sault Ste Marie, and I want to give him a chance to use up the last moments left in this debate. We are going from here tonight and tomorrow night — and I, quite frankly, am happy to admit I am tired, so I am looking forward to the break and to the chance to have some more time to spend in my riding. But I look across, both tonight and on the other evenings we've been here, and I see a lot of fatigue across the hall here and I don't think it's just because of the long hours. I think it's because members of the Tory caucus are beginning to realize that their message is not selling very well out there. They're trying all sorts of things, the latest being this direct selling they're doing out there, sending out the various missives.

I say to the government members, when you're out there during the summer, listen to what your constituents are telling you. If you ask them and if you hear them and if you listen to them, the majority of them will tell you what they are telling me, which is that even if they believe we all have to bring our fiscal house in order, you cannot and should not do it by sacrificing our health care system and our education system. That's what the Tory government is doing. That's what Bill 15 entrenches because, as I say, at

high income. That's what the essence of the Tory agenda is all about. But what's even worse is that in order for that to happen not only does the government have to borrow the money, but they also have to find money in other areas. Where are those areas? They're in health care and education, by and large. That's where we're seeing those cuts. We've talked many a time about these cuts. I can tell you that what the government is trying to do is simply not convincing many people out there.

Tonight I was at a commencement in one of my schools, at Oakwood Collegiate, a good school. It's a school that's 90 years old this year. Interestingly, as a bit of an aside, when the school, which is now in the heart of the western part of the old city of Toronto, was built 90 years ago there was a bit of a controversy about why the school board was building a school out in the country, if you can believe that. That's just a sign of how things have changed over these last 90 or so years here in the city. It's a good school, a school that has had a tradition of both very strong extracurricular activities but equally, and probably even more so, strong academic achievement for its students. In fact, the principal was noting tonight how a high percentage of graduating students this year, as in previous years, have achieved the status of Ontario scholars.

But there, I can tell you, both tonight and in the many other times I've had the chance to be in that school and in many other schools, people are very concerned about what is happening. One former science teacher said to me: "I can't believe this. We have this new science curriculum" — which he says is generally good; it's not great stuff, but it's actually good, solid stuff — "but then we have the government telling us that the textbooks we have to get are the textbooks based on the old curriculum."

To my colleague who wanted me to talk about textbooks, let me say to him that this is exactly what happens when the wrong reasons drive the agenda. When the government is telling schools and school boards, "Order the textbooks and have them in by September so that we can have photo ops with all of our MPPs," the boards, in the rush to be able to spend this money and use this money, are having to make bad decisions or decisions that are not as good and as solid on an education front as they would be if they had been able to make them in due time and with appropriate preparation.

That's essentially what the government is doing. They're trying to focus in on their message, and then of course from time to time they let the Premier back in the House and we see the charade we saw today. The handlers are working very hard to give this whole government a softer image, a "We're listening" approach. Then they put out, as has been pointed out by one Toronto columnist, one of the last missives they sent out, the little glossy one that talked about "Are we on the right track?" Listen to you." As the columnist notes — in language which I won't repeat, Speaker, because you would probably rule it out of order — the space that's there for com-

the heart of it is the income tax cut, which is the source of

all of those problems.

Mr Martin: I want to say to the folks in the House

tonight that I am happy to join in this debate and offer a

few thoughts for consideration as we come to the end of

this session of this Legislature. We're speaking tonight on

the budget of this government, that piece of work that

becomes in many significant ways the foundation block

for everything else they will do, the indication of where

this government feels its priorities are and what it feels

will be in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

As I look at the budget that was delivered by this gov-

ernment and I put it together with the speech from the

throne, among other things, I can say one thing: long on

rhetoric, short on substance and hard, very hard, on tar-

geting, targeting groups of people that it will continue to

blame and to demonize as it moves towards an election

again in this province, the same as it did the last time. This

is no different. This isn't a change in strategy. These are

the same old tactics of a party that seems to thrive on the

politics of resentment, of division, of sowing the seeds of

hard-heartedness and hatred.

What we're seeing with this government, supported by

the budget it presents, is again the targeting of, I suggest

to you, three different groups which it targeted in the last

election, which it has targeted through its three years as

government and which it now continues to hold up as the

cause of everything that ails us. One of those groups, as

the member across the way knows, my good friend from

Kitchener, is the poor.

The first group you caught in your cross-hairs in your

Common Sense Revolution, by way of some of the pro-

grams that you said you would introduce to deal with the

question of people on social assistance, was the poor. The

first thing you did when you got to be government was to

take 21.6% out of the incomes of those already vulnerable,

already poor, already struggling people in every one of the

communities in which we live, every one of the communi-

ties that we call home. Then, soon after that, you took

away the programs that supported them in their attempt to

better themselves, in their attempt to keep their dignity and

self-esteem intact, to keep their families together, to keep

body and soul together. You took them away ever so

slowly; you took them all away.

Then you came in with a program that you called

workfare, which at its very best is nothing more than an

attempt by this government to take people on social assis-

tance and set them up on a platform, on a stage, so we can

point at them and see in them everything that is wrong in

the society in which we live, to call them names they do

not in any way deserve.

The poor: Who are they? Most of the people on social

assistance in this province are children. What you've done

with children is you've removed them from their families,

as if to say, "Okay, we'll take children here," and they are

the major victims of the agenda of this government.

You've tried to carve them off from the adults who take

care of them. If you're not demonizing the children, you're

demonizing their families and in particular their mothers

2120

Interjections.

new economy that was coming at us.

— all our major industries were struggling: Algonia Steel, St Marys Paper, the Algonia Central Railway. We took each one of those, worked with the community, with the workers, with management, with the financial institutions, and as government were at the table as a partner, giving leadership, bringing resources, so that at the end of the day we had in 1993 three corporations that stood out as examples in that community, of what it was going to take to enter the next millennium with some degree of enthusiasm and optimism so we might all take advantage of the recession that was coming at us — it was global in nature we got to be the government in the early 1990s, with the Rae government, had righted itself over five years. When about my community for just a few minutes, because my community, under the courageous leadership of the Bob have an unemployment rate of some 20%. I want to talk in my own community, as I said a few minutes ago, we that all us in our communities.

These are the people we sacrifice. These are the people we write off. These are the people who will never get a job. No matter what the government says, no matter what the members across the way say, no matter what rhetoric they throw at us or how loud they speak or how agitated they get, we still have 9% to 10% average unemployment across this province, people who need our help, people who need to be able to put food on the table for their children, for their families, people who need to be able to pay the mortgage, people who need to be able to pay the rent. These are the people we have targeted. These are the people we have set up on a pedestal and called all kinds of names and blamed in so many unfair ways for the things that all us in our communities.

There is 20% unemployment in my own community of Sauli Ste Marie. Who do you think those people are? They are the people who are on social assistance. They are the people at the bottom rung, the folks in our communities who, for one reason or another, have not been able to access the education system to better themselves, who have not been able to access a whole lot of the programs that were put in place by previous governments so that they might be able to participate in the new economy that is coming at us.

The poor: Some have mentioned tonight since I got up on my feet that many of them have gone off the social assistance system. The poor are those 9% to 10% of our citizens who cannot find work because there is not enough business community and the industry community are creating.

ails us in this province today.

and their fathers. You're pointing at them and saying they are the cause of anything that anybody can point to that

The Acting Speaker: Order. The members for Grey-Owen Sound, Kitchener and London South, come to order.

Mr Martin: Those major corporations in my community have proved to be three very important success stories in the industrial restructuring and evolution of this prov-

ince, but that story is very seldom told, that story is very seldom understood out there, because you get the kind of flak that comes at us, perhaps because we're from northern Ontario or some community that's away from the heartland of this province, that says for some reason or other, simply because we took three of the biggest corporations — Algoma Steel that employs between 5,000 and 6,000 people, St Marys Paper that employs somewhere between 300 and 500 people, and the ACR around 300 people, all major industries in my community that were restructured, that were given a new lease on life by a government that knew it had a role to play, that it could give leadership and that if it brought the right resources to the table, a different approach could be found.

What happened? Just as we were poised to take off economically, just as Sault Ste Marie could feel the wind beneath its wings, Ontario elects a government that begins to tear at the very heart of the community in which we live.

In the world we live in today, particularly in Ontario and particularly in northern Ontario, we have over a number of years discovered that if we're going to have any stability at all, if there's going to be any confidence at all in the economy we all depend on, there has to be a mix of public sector and private sector. That's what we had found in Sault Ste Marie in 1993 and 1994, that perfect mix of public sector and private sector.

We restructured the private sector, we put it on a course that was positive and constructive, and this government came in and began to hack away at the jobs in the public sector. Most particularly, they tore apart the Ontario Lottery Corp, the corporation that was sent up to Sault Ste Marie — and the member for Kitchener knows of what I speak because he was on the committee when I raised this — by a Liberal government to help us begin the very important process of diversifying our economy. It was a corporation that from the year it was conceived made profit and made continually more profit every year after that, including the years, I suggest to the member for Kitchener, that it was in Sault Ste Marie — unbelievable profit, all going to the general revenue of this province so we could pay for health care and education and social services and all the other valuable things we deliver as a government to the people who elect us here and who pay the tab.

What did you do? You ripped it apart. Why? Because you had an ideological bent to privatize anything that

moved. The only reason you got away with it was that there was no organized labour group in that workplace to stop you, to raise the arguments, to present the arguments, to resist you as they did in the liquor control board instance and as they did in so many of the other very valuable public crown corporations that continue to operate in this province because this government backed down on its promise to privatize.

This brings me to the next group that is targeted by this government. It's so unfortunate because of what they've contributed to the quality of life of all of us who call Ontario home in this wonderful country of Canada. That's organized labour. I suggest to you, as I did the other night, that there isn't a member in this House today who can't say, if they trace their history back either directly or indirectly, that they're not here because of some contribution by organized labour to the life of their families, of their community.

Interjections.

Mr Martin: Are you telling me I'm finished tonight? I have so much more to say.

The Acting Speaker: Some other time.

Mr Sterling moved a resolution that was debated and passed on June 2, 1998. I'll read the appropriate part of it: "That one sessional day shall be allotted to third reading stage of the bill" — that's Bill 15. "At 5:55 pm or 9:25 pm, as the case may be, on such day, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment."

Mr Eves has moved third reading of Bill 15. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion is carried?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. This reads, "Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I'd like to request that the vote on Bill 15, tax cuts for people and small business, be deferred until June 25, 1998." It is signed by the Honourable David Turnbull. So be it.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. I'd ask the members in the chamber to take their seats. It being almost 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 am tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 2128.

CONTENTS

Wednesday 24 June 1998

THIRD READINGS

Tax Cuts for People and for
Small Business Act, 1998,
Bill 15, *Mr Eves*

Mr Baird	1861, 1872
Mr Parker	1864
Mr Galt	1866
Mr Ford	1868
Mr Ramsay	1870, 1872
Mr Len Wood	1871
Mr Carroll	1871, 1881
Mr Michlash	1871, 1881
Mr Phillips	1874
Mr Conway	1876
Mr Bradley	1878, 1882
Mr Duncan	1881
Mr Martin	1881, 1884
Mr Silipo	1882
Vote deferred	1885

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 24 juin 1998

TROISIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 1998 sur la réduction des impôts des particuliers et des petites entreprises, projet de loi 15, <i>M. Eves</i> Vote différé	1885
--	------



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Deuxième session, 36^e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeu'di 25 juin 1998



Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Legislative Assembly
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Second Session, 36th Parliament

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Honourable Chris Stockwell

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Jeu'di 25 juin 1998

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 25 June 1998

*The House met at 1000.
Prayers.*

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

Mr Carroll moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 34, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act / Projet de loi 34, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Pursuant to standing order 95(c)(i), the member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): It's a pleasure to be here this morning to lead off the debate on my first important bill, but there's no quorum here this morning.

The Acting Speaker: Would you please check if we have a quorum.

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Chatham-Kent.

Mr Carroll: Quorum calls on Thursday morning are unusual, but I thank the member for Algoma-Manitoulin for operating a motor vehicle as defined in the Highway Traffic Act unless the gasoline contains at least 1.7% of oxygen by weight," and it allows the act to come into force on January 1, 2005.

There is a lot of talk about ethanol around the province, and the bill specifically does not limit the oxygenating product. It talks simply in terms of an oxygen level of

2.7%. That currently would translate into an ethanol blend of about 8%. Ethanol is currently the most efficient fuel, and ethanol produced from corn is the most efficient. In six or seven years' time, there's no telling what could happen.

This House has seen quite a history of conversation about ethanol. Many very distinguished members of this House have spoken about the issue: the member for Party Sound, the current finance minister, Ernie Eves, has spoken of it; the leader of the third party, Howard Hampton, has spoken often of it; former Agriculture Minister Elmer Buchanan of the New Democratic Party was a big champion of ethanol; the member for Grey-Owen Sound, Mr Murdoch, has spoken about it.

I must make some comment about my predecessor, Randy Hope, who was a member of the NDP government, the member for Chatham-Kent, who was a champion of the cause and in fact was very instrumental in moving the government forward and moving the creation of a plant in Chatham-Kent. I want to acknowledge Randy's role in that.

In actual fact, the third recommendation of a fuel ethanol discussion paper by the New Democrats in 1992 was "to actively encourage market demand for ethanol-blended gasolines by encouraging legislated ethanol use."

Back in 1992 we talked about legislated use of ethanol, and here we are in 1998 and very little has happened.

There are three areas I would like to touch on this morning, three positives about this particular bill. The first one involves the environment. My colleague the member for Guelph will be speaking more to this issue because one of her interests in life is the environment. But the use of ethanol, the use of oxygen in fuel as an octane enhancer and as an additive reduces the level of carbon monoxide and benzene levels at the tailpipe. So it certainly reduces negative emissions at the tailpipe, and two of the most deadly are carbon monoxide and benzene.

From an agricultural standpoint, this is where we get into some big positives. Currently the use of corn to generate ethanol is a big boost to the farmers in our community. The Ontario Corn Producers' Association, Mr Badie, said, "The impact of the legislation on the ethanol industry could be quite dramatic, requiring more than triple the present level of ethanol manufacturing to ensure domestic supply."

Farmers are the true stewards of our land. It's interesting that in that role, as the true stewards of our land and our environment, they have the capacity to produce a product that could be used to blend with gasoline to

use residential waste. The technology is being worked on to

What we're really talking about in this Bill 34, An Act

to amend the Environmental Protection Act, is not so much ethanol or oxygenated fuels, what we're really talking about is cleaner fuel. We can talk about cleaner fuel all we want, but until such time as we take it upon ourselves to mandate, at a particular point in time, that all

fuel sold in the province must contain a minimum level of oxygen, until we have the courage to do that, I don't believe those with the expertise to develop the new products we require will really see the benefit in developing them. Why would you spend a lot of money creating some new products to blend with gasoline if there wasn't any requirement that they ever be used?

When I look at Bill 34, when I look at the situation, I see that the environment wins, because it would reduce the level of carbon monoxide and benzene emissions from the tailpipe. The agricultural community in our great province, which is very important to us, wins big time. Noble, Villeneuve, the Minister of Agriculture, has been very supportive of ethanol as an alternative fuel. When I look at that, I see we've created a lot of new jobs. To me, it looks like everybody wins.

It's ironic that, on this day that we're in this House debating an issue that involves cleaner air, a smog alert is issued in the city of Toronto. When we hear warnings to older people and children about being outside today because of the poor quality of our air, it's time we got serious about ways to improve the quality of our air.

Mr. Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to join the debate on the bill and to say that certainly I'll be supporting the bill, and to say how important it is that we move aggressively on the environment. The member mentioned it is ironic that we are debating this today because it probably is the worst air day in two or three years, if not more. It's almost symbolic that we would be debating a bill that should result in cleaner air.

I would also say that our corn producers are absolutely world-class. We can compete with corn producers anywhere in the world, without a question of a doubt. We have a ready-made future supply of high-quality corn at reasonable prices. As we look ahead at a sustainable fuel, this also meets that criteria. It is proven that it will improve the air quality. It's a bill that we have no difficulty in supporting.

I would say to the people who are watching this debate that it is a debate around the environment. It is useful to remind ourselves of what's going on right now outside our walls. By the way, the condition of the air in the Toronto area is very poor today. There is a warning to suggest that people with any kind of respiratory problems should stay indoors and avoid strenuous exercise. Also, many organizations are trying to cut down on emissions. It is also ironic that, as we're speaking here, the government has its own lawnmowers outside, literally, right now. When other organizations have stopped cutting the grass to cut down on emissions, the government has its own lawnmowers cutting the grass.

Then we talk about the whole job creation issue. The state of Minnesota currently mandates the use of ethanol, the first state in the United States to do that. They use 2.7%, the number we are suggesting in our act. They indicate that in Minnesota this piece of legislation they enacted in January 1997 has led to the creation of 4,000 to 5,000 new jobs in that state, directly in the ethanol industry and in spinoffs. There is obviously great potential for us here in Ontario, because their ethanol use, based on their population, is substantially less than ours.

We know that the volume required — 900 million litres, roughly, is what is estimated, up to one billion litres — would see the necessity of the construction of three to four more plants of the same capacity as the great plant that we have in Chatham-Kent. So there is a great opportunity there for additional jobs to be created in the province through construction, as well as additional jobs through the manufacture of ethanol.

We rely on gasoline produced from crude oil to run our vehicles and, as you know, we import a lot of that. Our memories are still, I'm sure, relatively fresh from the time when other countries in the world that had control of that industry chose to hold the rest of us hostage. It would certainly be to our advantage to move to an environment where we could have a domestically produced fuel that we could use in our automobiles, rather than rely solely on foreign crude oil.

1010

We are only looking at roughly an 8% blend. There are vehicles in the United States now, sold by the manufacturers — they are called E-85 vehicles — that will run on an 85% blend of ethanol. All the car manufacturers, in their warranties, say that up to 10% ethanol blend is quite acceptable. As a matter of fact, some of them even go so far as to encourage the use of ethanol. So there's no problem from the standpoint of automobile warranties, from the standpoint of performance, from the standpoint of the environment and from agriculture.

As we look to the future, while corn is currently the product of choice to produce ethanol, and ethanol is currently the oxygenating agent that looks to be the most efficient, there's a lot of technology being developed out there, being worked on, to use other products. The other products are very interesting. Over and above other cash crops, sugar beets could be used, other types of grains could be used. We could even use cheese to produce ethanol. But over and above those particular edible products, there is technology being worked on to use waste paper, wood chips, leaves to produce ethanol. A lot of things that have not a lot of other use could in fact be used to produce ethanol. We could even go so far as to use

My concern is that, while this is an important bill, I hoped the government might have found a way to deal with the environment on a more comprehensive basis in addition to this bill. I think the environment is indeed suffering now as the result of government cuts. When Mike Harris became Premier, the ministry had a staff of around 2,400 people; it's now down by 750 people that they've cut out of the Ministry of the Environment. In 1994-95 the government was spending on the environment roughly \$260 million; this year the budget is \$143 million. The Ministry of the Environment budget is not quite cut in half, but almost cut in half.

I'm not one who says that money solves all, but there's no question that the protection of the environment does require an investment by the public in sustaining the quality of the environment. We find that, when we look at the government's commitment to the environment, they've cut the Ministry of the Environment budget almost in half. We see they've cut more than a quarter of the jobs out of the Ministry of the Environment. There were 700 water monitoring stations a mere six years ago; now there are 200 water monitoring stations. And so it goes.

It should perhaps come as no surprise to us that we are beginning to run into some serious problems on the environment. I realize that Mike Harris is an unabashed free enterpriser. I am very much supportive of our business community growing the economy, but one of the things that Ontario also demands is that we monitor and are stewards of the environment.

This bill, as I say, is a worthwhile step forward, but I would also say to the member for Chatham-Kent, I hope in his caucus he is spending a lot of time urging the cabinet to make the environment once again a high priority. You can see the number of people we have available to work into the environment, the number of water monitoring stations down now to 200 from 700 a mere six years ago. We've also seen substantial changes in the legislative and regulatory protection of the environment.

The government passed a bill called Bill 20 that changed the Planning Act. I think anybody who looked at that would acknowledge that it severely weakened the legal and the policy tools that were available to protect the environment. The Legislature passed Bill 76. That changed the Environmental Assessment Act and substantially tied the hands of the Environmental Assessment Board to review major environmental projects. I could go on: Bill 57 also changed the Environmental Protection Act; Bill 107 downloaded or moved on to the municipalities the responsibility for 230 water and sewage treatment plants, all of which require, for the property taxpayers, a substantial investment.

To conclude, so that I leave my colleague some time to talk on this bill, we are supportive of the ethanol bill. We are supportive of any responsible steps that will protect our environment. We are supportive because the Ontario corn producers are world-class in their ability to produce quality corn at worldwide competitive prices, so this is one future source of fuel that we are assured of. I hope the

government caucus will put as much pressure as possible on the Premier and on the Minister of the Environment to do a U-turn and get back to giving the environment the priority it deserves here in Ontario.

1020

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riversdale): I've told Mr Carroll, the member for Chatham-Kent, that we will be supporting this bill today. I want to publicly congratulate him for bringing it forward and would like to indicate again that we're in full support of this bill.

I acknowledge that Mr Carroll mentioned that it was during our term in government — in particular I remember very well the lobbying by Mr Randy Hope, the then member for Chatham-Kent, and of course as an environmentalist I was always there supporting him. We were in very tough recession and we were talking about spending money. As you know, that was a source of great criticism, particularly from the opposition at the time. But I believe over all everybody was in support of spending money on a plant in the area, because not only did it create jobs but it went a long way towards improving our environment.

This is a really good example of how you can create jobs and at the same time protect the environment. We need to be using this as an example and looking more and more to how we can put the two together, because unfortunately what we hear mostly, an awful lot, is that we have to cut red tape and regulations because it's a job killer. That is happening to some extent in the environment, and we haven't gotten away from that mentality. This is a very important step today that has been taken by the member. I applaud him for bringing it forward. I'd like to see the Minister of the Environment come in today and assure us that he will back this and make sure it goes forward. I'm disappointed that we're not having third reading today. In fact, I would suggest that if there's support from everybody, we could go ahead today and just get right through it. I don't know if the minister is supporting this or not.

Certainly, as I said, when we were in government this issue became a very important one for the former member, Randy Hope, and we were able to work with the federal government and we invested in the plant in the area. I'm glad to see that the member today, Mr Carroll, is coming forward with badly needed regulations now.

I'm sure the member won't be surprised if I use this opportunity, having congratulated him, to talk, however, about the government's overall record on the environment and to the some of the things Mr Carroll is bringing forward today into that record. One of the things that concerns me is, for instance, that his government, having gotten rid of the CURB program, which is another program our government brought in — that's the Clean Up Rural Beaches program. One of the reasons that was so important was it was a program to help agricultural farmers to deal with the runoff from pesticides on their land.

There was a report; I believe it was the draft state of the environment report prepared by the MOE itself. That report indicated that runoff from agricultural operations is

minister would come in today and say yes, he is going to support this private member's bill today, but that he is going to announce that the vehicle emissions control testing program is going to start this summer as well.

I want to take this opportunity again to thank the member for bringing forward this bill and to let him know that he has our support today. I will be speaking to the minister — I don't know if he has — to see if he's going to make sure that this bill — I'd like to see it, as I said, pass today and go through all three readings so we can get on with it. Perhaps Mr Carroll can indicate later whether the Minister of the Environment is going to let this go ahead, because I know that if ministers don't want bills to go ahead, they have really effective ways in dealing with that and making sure that they don't go ahead, that they die on the order paper or whatever.

Mr Gilles Bissson (Cochrane South): We know what it's like.

Ms Chuley: My colleague from Cochrane South says, "Boy, do we know about that."

Having been a minister, of course, at one time, I would never have interfered with any backbenchers to let bills go through. But we know that happens.

This is one small piece in a very big puzzle and I hope we can get it to go through the House and have it effective.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): First, I'd like to commend the member for Chatham-Kent for introducing a private member's bill intended to reduce tailpipe emissions in Ontario. There's no doubt that smog is a serious problem, as we witness here today. It aggravates a wide range of health ailments, especially respiratory illnesses and it damages the environment by harming vegetation materials and crops.

I'd like to bring to the attention of the member to Scarborough-Agincourt, who commented on our track record, what has happened federally with his federal cousins. This was written by Elizabeth May and was in the Globe and Mail on June 22. She is the executive director of the Sierra Club. It says, "Five years later it is clear that the Progressive Conservative floor has become the Liberals' ceiling." She goes on to say that five years later, under a Liberal government, "Environment Canada has moved from being the seventh largest department in the Canadian bureaucracy to nearly the smallest among the Conservative Prime Minister and what has happened to the current Liberal Prime Minister. "The problem was not so much that I couldn't recall Mr Chrétien saying anything so forceful about the environment; it was that I couldn't even imagine him giving such a speech."

The member for Riverview talked about the CUR program. Obviously she's interested in the NDP approach of charge, convict, fine and harass the public rather than working with farmers to ensure these kinds of pollution will not reach our environment.

I'm pleased to report that the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs certainly supports this bill. The leading cause of declining surface water quality in southern Ontario. That is pretty significant and important. I would like to see, while we are advancing — and I certainly support it — more work for corn producers and this certainly gives them an opportunity to produce more corn, and that's a good thing, but we can't ignore other problems as we increase agricultural activity. I would like to see the government bring back this program. It was a small program, but it was a worthwhile one that started to deal with some of those runoff problems, for which I believe the farmers were happy to accept assistance from the government.

Today, as my colleague from Scarborough-Agincourt mentioned — I believe Mr Carroll mentioned it too — is a very bad air quality day in Toronto. I have been pushing the Minister of the Environment and this government for some time now to move ahead with clean air regulations. As you know, we've been pushing the government since they came into office to do something about mandatory tailpipe emissions testing. Our government brought in the very first volunteer experimental program in Ontario. By the time the election in 1995 happened, it was ready to move forward into a mandatory program.

The Minister of the Environment continues to say they want to move carefully and slowly to make sure it's done right. There certainly is evidence that the ministry no longer has the resources or the ability to put this program in place. That is a big problem. When we have had air days like today, there is a whole bunch of things that need to be done. Yes, this will go a small way in helping with the problems, but only a small way. There needs to be an overall air pollution plan. There has been one. There have been a couple of very damning reports that have come out recently on the state of the environment in Ontario in regard to this government's approach to environmental protection, which is to deregulate and cut. One of the things that is talked about is air emission problems and the issues around the government's cleanup program, it being weak and not going far enough, and furthermore there's no action on it; it's moving very slowly and it's not substantive enough.

Here we are today, on the last day of the session before what is now widely known is going to be a long, hot summer. I don't know if you can hear it in my voice today; I don't have asthma, but I do have problems in this kind of weather. I'm not going to die from it, I'm not even going to end up in a hospital. I know that. I can't ride my bike, though, on days I'd like to ride my bike to save emissions from my car going into the air, because the air's too hard for me to breathe today, riding my bike in the smog. That's a small problem.

There are people — as we know, up to 1,800 a year die in Ontario from pollution. The warnings today said that certain people shouldn't exercise; certain people shouldn't even go outside. It's a very serious problem that needs to be dealt with. This government continues to say it's going to, but here's the last day and we're going to have another long, hot summer, where people are literally going to die as a result of the smog problems. I would hope that the

Minister of the Environment and I also support the proposed bill in principle. It would amend the Environmental Protection Act to require all gasoline sold in Ontario to have a minimum oxygen content of 2.7%. This would mean that Ontario gasoline would have to contain 7.5% ethanol or other oxygenates.

Currently the use of oxygenates in Canada is voluntary. The federal government gives ethanol-blended gasoline its Ecologo endorsement. There is general agreement that boosting the oxygen content of gasoline improves combustion. The use of oxygenates has been shown to reduce carbon monoxide. On the other hand, no significant improvements have been found for newer vehicles with advanced technologies. On average, oxides of nitrogen, or NO_x emissions are not affected, although low aromatic gasoline shows an increase in NO_x of some 5%.

The future of oxygen-blended fuels is being considered as part of a broader clean air strategy. Certainly Ontario has made a long-range commitment to reduce smog under an Ontario smog plan. We're taking action to address vehicle emissions from Ontario's more than six million vehicles. The ministry's air sniffer, called the Smog Rover, is out every week taking air readings in the GTA. Recently it found that 34% of nearly 5,000 vehicles monitored needed tune-ups. Our new Drive Clean program will reduce those numbers.

All of these initiatives and partnerships are working towards cleaner air for Ontario. In this effort, a major goal is to reduce smog-causing emissions by 45% by 2015. Clean air is in everyone's best interests. I can assure the members of this House that the ministry will review the environmental implications of ethanol and other oxygenates in gasoline. We will make it part of our consultation with stakeholders as part of our overall strategy for cleaner vehicles and fuels.

This bill needs to be referred to a standing committee for full investigation and consideration. If it passes this test, it should be adopted as an innovative measure to provide renewable and alternative fuel choices. I urge all of you to give serious consideration to this private member's bill and to applaud the member for Chatham-Kent's sincere concern about this environmental issue.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I was going to congratulate the member for Chatham-Kent on bringing forward this initiative until I heard the member for Northumberland. The member for Northumberland seems to make the argument that it's okay for this government to have cut the Ministry of the Environment by half because the federal government has cut. Basically that's what he's saying. He's saying that the federal government has cut, to that therefore excuses what this government has done. The member also demonstrated a complete lack of understanding of what the CURB program was, which surprises me, considering that he used to be a civil servant in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. He seemed to think it was a fines program, putting fines on people. In fact, the CURB program was a program that assisted farmers with new technologies and new approaches to try to curb the runoff of waste, the runoff of

pesticide and herbicide residues and fertilizers into the creeks, the streams and so on.

Under the CURB program, there weren't fines. One of the things the CURB program did was encourage farmers to build fences along streams so that livestock wouldn't get into the creeks and defecate in the creeks. I suppose that's in some way curbing or confining cattle, and I suppose, being a veterinarian, the member likes to see free-ranging for cattle or something. I don't know. He was opposed to the CURB program, obviously, and that explains why this government got rid of it.

We have a real, serious problem, particularly in the area of Lake Huron — I said "Lake Huron" not "Lake Urine" — with regard to agricultural runoff in the creeks and rivers running into that Great Lake. The farm community is concerned, as are many others. The idea of cleaning up rural beaches was something that was supported by the farm community, by the rural communities throughout Ontario, and certainly by environmental groups. It's a real shame that this government chose to discontinue that very important program.

Specifically with regard to this bill, the member for Chatham-Kent is emphasizing the importance of ethanol, not only for fuel but for other purposes, as a way of cutting down on the very serious pollution problems we face. He mentioned the role of his predecessor as member for Chatham-Kent, in the previous government, in providing assistance to establish the plant in his riding. The previous government provided somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$175,000 to assist in the feasibility study and a pilot project, which eventually led to the establishment of the plant. We were glad to do that, because we understood the importance, not only for the corn producers and for the agricultural community but for all of our society, of looking for and encouraging alternatives. We also saw it, of course, as an economic development possibility for that part of southwestern Ontario.

It is ironic, as one of the other members mentioned, that on a day when we have a terrible smog alert in the Toronto area, in Metropolitan Toronto, and people with respiratory problems, elderly people and young children are being advised to stay indoors, this government, which professes to be interested in the long-term — underlined — air quality program would have their lawnmowers running on the laws of Queen's Park, putting out emissions from gasoline and so on into the atmosphere and adding to the smog we're all going to face in this area today, at a time when the city of Toronto is asking people not to run their own lawnmowers.

Now, the member for — where are you? Oh, yes, the long name — Prince Edward, Lennox and so on is suggesting that we should just have push lawnmowers and that would probably be good for people's health as well as long as they don't have respiratory problems; that if they must be out on a day like today to cut the lawn, then they should be using push lawnmowers rather than gasoline-powered lawnmowers.

Mr Gale: They shouldn't be using motorized ones either.

for the agricultural community and for a very important industry in our province, that being agriculture.

Bill 76, changes to the Environmental Assessment Act, gives the hands of the Environmental Assessment Board to adequately review major environmental projects. There's no requirement that major new landfill sites will be referred to the board for full environmental review.

If you pass Bill 57, changes to the Environmental Protection Act, it gives the minister sweeping powers to exempt any person, activity or thing from the Environmental Protection Act.

Environmental regulatory review: Some 40 environmental regulations are proposed to be changed or scrapped under your so-called responsible environmental protection paper. Proposals include allowing blood to be dumped into municipal sewer systems.

When I look at the record of the Ministry of the Environment, I just wish several other members of the Legislature would have brought forward other bills to compensate for the absolute destruction of the Ministry of the Environment by this government.

I know this pleases a certain segment out there, the people who want to pollute, the people who don't want to spend the money on appropriate staff in their operations or on the training of that staff on the equipment.

There are two groups who oppose the deceleration of the Ministry of the Environment, the dismantling of that ministry. One group is the general population who have to accept the consequences of poor environmental policy and regulation and legislation. We're facing that today, all over Ontario but particularly in the major urban centres where the smog is just hanging over these communities and great health problems are there. Second, it's the good business people, the responsible people out there who have spent the time, have spent the money, who have purchased the equipment, who have put staff on guard and who have trained that staff. They are the people who are annoyed when they see others within the business community get away with breaking these laws.

You're going to find a lot of support among those top-notch, good corporate citizens. But what happens? You're catering to those who want to break the laws of this province.

While I am happy to see this bill come forward, it's only one little piece and this government has a lot to do. A lot of it has to do with attitude. I know they like to say: "We want people to be cooperative. We want to gain their cooperation. We don't want to prosecute. We don't want those laws are enforced, the better it is for our province, for the health of all the people in this province, and the animals and the plant life, but second, the better it is for those good corporate citizens who have invested the money, the time and the employees, who have changed their equipment, who have avoided purveying pollution in this province. They are the ones who want to see these positive environmental changes.

Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte): I want to rise today in support of the member for Chatham-Kent on his

the fact that if you want to enforce environmental laws in this province, if you want to make environmental laws, if you want to inspect appropriately, you've got to have the staff, you've got to have the resources and you've got to have the budget and, in this regard, this government has totally abandoned the environment.

We have had 880 positions lost in the Ministry of the Environment. Some 36% of the staff are gone from the Ministry of the Environment as a result of the budget cuts of this government. The operating budget has been reduced by some 42% in the Ministry of the Environment. In the Ministry of Natural Resources, 2,170 jobs have disappeared; that's 43%. The budget cut is 31% in the Ministry of Natural Resources.

If you look all around, for instance at the compliance and enforcement branch — we called that the investigation and enforcement branch, the green cops, if you will — that has been cut by \$15 million, or 30%. The inspection staff and budget have been greatly reduced: 141 jobs lost. Reduction in inspection and enforcement has resulted in a drop in charges against polluters: 683 charges were laid against polluters in the first 10 months of 1996 compared to 1,037 in all of 1995, a 21% reduction. Fines have dropped 57%. The Ministry of the Environment's prosecution unit has been reduced from 10 people to four people. The number of water monitoring stations has fallen from nearly 700 to just over 200. What is happening is that there is a total abandonment of the environment by this government.

Look out today at the problem we're confronting and this government has done virtually nothing. They're sitting in the Ministry of the Environment now, because they have — they had some excellent staff. I know they've hired at least a third of them out the door. But there is an excellent program for clean air that is sitting in the Ministry of the Environment waiting to be implemented. It involves not only mobile sources but stationary sources, something which builds on the Countdown Acid Rain program, for instance, which was implemented beginning in 1985 and is now fully completed.

There are so many initiatives that can be taken dealing with, for instance, tailpipe testing, the tuning of vehicles, the assurance, that the pollution abatement equipment in vehicles — all vehicles, not just cars but the trucks and one of the steps that has to be taken. There are so many that have to be taken, however, and you can't do it by continually cutting the budget.

We have had several initiatives taken which weaken the position of the Ministry of the Environment and the several bills that have been passed.

Bill 20, changes to the Planning Act, severely weakens legal and policy tools to curb both the environmental and economic excesses of urban sprawl and to protect Ontario's natural heritage. My friend from Chatham-Kent knows the potential problems that urban sprawl can cause

Much of Ontario's corn and soybean production, which accounts for over 50% of the acreage in Ontario, is under cultivation, some nine million acres in total, that is under what is referred to as a GPS system, a global positioning satellite. The harvesters, the fertilizers and the planters are all equipped with this mechanism that will give a position in the field of within one foot. So when the crop is being harvested it is monitored and the harvest throughout that field is known exactly as to what it is. The next year, when fertilizing takes place, that same computer-based knowledge distributes the fertilizer in that field in exactly the position it is required to be in in order to maximize that yield.

Farming today cannot withstand the losses that would be involved with run-off or other wasted materials, such as the opposition have referred to. Agriculture today has entered the very high-tech business and is among the forefront of the farming community in the world, and we produce crops that are without equal. These crops, when put to good use in producing ethanol, will put a floor price under this product. I congratulate the member for Chatham-Kent for bringing in this bill.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Chatham-Kent, you have two minutes.

Mr. Carroll: I want to first of all thank all my colleagues on both sides of the House who stood in support of this initiative. I appreciate their support.

I hadn't quite expected that my bill would be a high-riding rod for the opposition like it was, but I guess this place being as it is, it was that.

I would like to make a comment about the tailpipe emission issue. The province and the federal government set standards and I believe that is their role. As citizens we have an obligation, and the obligation we have as citizens is to maintain our vehicles in running order. We know when we don't get tune-ups, and we know that when we don't get tune-ups we cause our vehicles to issue more pollutants.

If the government has to be the big policeman all the time to come along and tell us when we're doing wrong then how much can we expect the government to be protected if it's only protected when the government is a watchdog? I encourage all the people who drive cars — they understand that manufacturers suggest what maintenance schedules are required. People understand that and they should be responsible for looking after those issues on their own.

What we have before us today is a bill that I believe represents a win-win situation. It represents a win for the environment, it represents a win for the agricultural community because it provides an additional market for some products that we can grow, and it represents an enormous win for job creation. Also, it allows some time for those who are out there to develop some new innovative products to produce cleaner gasoline so that the environment we will be handing on to our children and to our grandchildren at some point in time is better than it is today and as good as we can possibly make it.

I appreciate the opportunity to present my bill today.

endeavour to bring this bill in. I think it's the foresight we need to see as a government, and as a backbencher, to have him bring this forward.

One of the things that is nice is that we're replacing some of the crude oil qualities that we are wasting and using. If we can cut that down by a few percentage points, such as 10 percentage points — I know the oil companies may not be as enthused about this bill as some of the other people in our environment who are concerned with it. But Sunoco has taken the bullet and led off by taking basically all the ethanol that's produced in Ontario. They are using it now. They're doing very well.

One of the things, as a mechanic and a service station operator, is that I know some mechanics say that if a car has been using ethanol there's a problem with it, but I think mechanics have been very ill-informed as far as the formulation of fuel is concerned and what it has done as far as the internal combustion engine is concerned, because ethanol injected does not destroy any parts or pieces of it.

Some of the information we have in front of us here: North Dakota, New Mexico, Idaho, those states, banded together and said, "We'll reward anybody with \$100 if you will come forth with any engine to show us any deterioration or if it's caused because of use of ethanol in your engine. Where there's any destruction whatsoever, we will pay you." So far they have not paid out one penny towards that \$100.

Chrysler Corp is one of the first to develop and test vehicles that will use the multi-fuel reformer developed by Arthur D. Little. It was funded by the USDOE and the DCCA. The reformer was originally designed to use ethanol fuel.

The state of Illinois is testing and demonstrating four of the first 15 pre-production E-85 FFV Ford Windstar minivans. These vans use the same 3.0-litre V6 FFV engine used in the E-85 FFV Ford Taurus model. These are the same kind of vehicles we see on the road every day, and those people are finding no problems with the use of those vehicles.

I know that the Ford Motor Co Ranger pickup, equipped with the 3.0-litre V6 engine, will be a flexible fuel vehicle capable of operating on E-85 fuel, gasoline, or a mixture of these fuels.

These people in these companies have had the foresight to see what ethanol and the oxygen-producing ingredient can add to our environment and make it just a little safer place.

We could go on longer, but I would like to share my time, so congratulations to the member again.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton North): It gives me great pleasure to stand in the House today and support the member for Chatham-Kent's private member's bill in the time available to me.

I've heard a number of comments concerning agricultural production techniques in Ontario, and the run-off and conversations like that, and I wonder sometimes how intimately knowledgeable the members of the opposition are about production techniques in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: The time allotted for the first ballot item has expired.

1100

ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 SUR LA SEMAINE DE L'AGRICULTURE EN ONTARIO

Mr Bert Johnson moved the following bill:

Bill 37, An Act to designate a week of recognition for Ontario's Farmers / Projet de loi 137, Loi désignant une semaine de reconnaissance envers les agriculteurs de l'Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Pursuant to standing order 95(c)(i), the honourable member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth): It's indeed a pleasure for me to move second reading of Bill 37, An Act to designate a week of recognition for Ontario's farmers.

If passed, this bill will provide special recognition for the contribution of Ontario's farmers to our society by proclaiming a week, commencing on the Monday immediately before Thanksgiving Day in each year, as Ontario Agriculture Week.

The act would set aside a time in which all citizens of Ontario can acknowledge, reflect on and celebrate the hard work of Ontario farmers, farm families and agricultural workers. These are the people and communities who provide us with the food we eat and with many of the products we use in our daily lives, which unfortunately we too often take for granted.

Thanksgiving Day and the week leading up to it is ideally suited, I believe, for paying tribute to Ontario's agriculture industry and celebrating its achievements on our behalf.

Throughout the year the hard work, dedication and expertise of farm families of Ontario ensure that safe, fresh, quality food and other agricultural products are available to everyone. At Thanksgiving the harvest is nearing completion and we can see the full bounty of what Ontario has to offer the world.

This bill is a result of much consultation and deliberation. In the gallery today are many of those leaders and individuals who provided input and ideas, and I'd like to thank them for coming to this second reading debate today — of particular interest, Mr Ed Segsworth, the president of the OFA, and Jon Dreise from the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario.

Today we are part of a global economy with a faster pace of life. Technology is advancing in quantum leaps, and yet nothing can replace the contribution of the farmer. There's nobody in the world who does farming and food production better than the farmers of Ontario.

Over a century ago, when this country was formed, nearly 90% of Canadians were engaged in agriculture. These days the percentages have decreased, but the facts surrounding our agri-food industry speak for its importance. There are more than 67,000 farms in Ontario where

each farmer produces enough food to feed 120 people. More than 200 commodities are produced in Ontario, including fruits, vegetables, livestock, dairy products, poultry, grains, honey and oil seeds. Ontario is number one in Canada in total farm cash receipts, totalling \$6.9 billion.

Ontario's agri-food industry is extremely diverse and includes a great number of people who would not define themselves as farmers. This bill celebrates their many contributions to Ontario, as they deserve special recognition and grateful acknowledgement by this province.

This is reflected in the fact that the agri-food industry contributes more than \$25 billion to the provincial economy each year and employs over 640,000 people. Every \$1 million of output from agriculture and related services generates 31 jobs. That's more jobs per dollar of output than any other industry. In 1997, we shipped \$5.6 billion in agri-food products around the world, an increase of 167% in just the last 10 years.

The agri-food industry is in fact the second-largest industry in Ontario, and as the farmers of Ontario like to say, "If you eat, you're involved in agriculture."

The purpose of this legislation is not to provide an exhaustive list of those who can participate. Instead, it will give everyone involved in agriculture an opportunity to show their pride in what they do to provide for the people of Ontario and others around the world.

How many people do you know who, when asked where milk comes from, would say, "The fridge"? How many others are unaware of the tremendous process behind the production of foodstuffs they buy on a regular basis at their local supermarket? One of the purposes of Ontario Agriculture Week will be to correct the stereotypes and the myths about our agriculture industry that are both inaccurate and outdated.

Ontario's agriculture industry today is more complex and diverse than it was even 10 years ago. The industry is involved in all facets of research. It is on the crest of the latest breaking technologies and advancements in scientific fields. As an example, the farmers in Perth and other places use the global positioning system, GPS, to plant, fertilize and harvest their crops.

Our agriculture industry is leading and we as citizens of Ontario are benefiting in terms of jobs, investment and excellent products that we should be very proud of. These quality products are some of the best ambassadors wherever they appear in the international market. One of the goals of this bill is in fact to increase public awareness of this living agricultural legacy which belongs to all of us and should make us extremely proud as farmers, as agricultural workers and as Ontarians.

I know I'm speaking for everyone in the Legislature when I say that we understand the tremendous contributions that the farmers of Ontario make to the economy and the overall economic wellbeing of the province. We know that farmers, food manufacturers and rural residents share a lot of the attributes that will continue to put Ontario on the leading edge. The independence, good sense, innovation and foresight shown by the agricultural community in

work and dedication of Ontario's farmers is recognized and appreciated.

Ontario's agri-food sector is getting stronger, and a strong agri-food sector builds prosperous rural communities. Let's start now to ensure that the future of agriculture is a true cause for celebration.

I'd like to end with a saying that is often used by a friend of agriculture, "Mankind, despite all their accomplishments, owe their existence to six inches of topsoil and the fact that it rains." Thank you, Mary. It's a simple truthful and accurate statement.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I'm pleased to join the debate on the motion sponsored by my colleague, the member for Perth. I want to take this opportunity to say that agriculture and farming are certainly important in my part of eastern Ontario. The county of Renfrew over the decades has seen very considerable agricultural activity. Rural communities like Douglas, Bechburg and Cobden, to name but three, are a vital part of the daily life, not just socially but economically, of my home district.

It is an evident fact of daily life in Renfrew county that agriculture and rural affairs are extremely important particularly to the economic wellbeing of my county. The agricultural community in the Ottawa Valley has seen some very strong leadership. When I visit annually the agricultural Wall of Fame dinner and awards ceremony usually held in the town of Renfrew, I'm reminded that families like the Galbraiths, the Kilbys and the Gallaghers, to name but three, have been very important in providing leadership, not just to the county but to provincial and national organizations.

At the present time, Mr Bob Dobson from the Cobden area is the president of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association. People like Ellard Powers from the Beachburg area have played a very active role in not just provincial but national associations. Mr Del O'Brien, a very well known lawyer in the city of Pembroke, has been a very strong spokesperson for agricultural issues in the province and county for many years. That farming is important, that agriculture is important in my county is evident.

I must say, in the time I have this morning, farmers in my area would want me to say that all is not well. They are concerned in places like Douglas that they've lost the bank. They are concerned in communities like Adamastow and Westmeath and Ross that the resources they have come to rely on in the community, provided by ministries like agriculture and food, for example, and natural resources, are being reduced. It is absolutely clear that farmers and rural folks in areas like Renfrew county that the front-line services they have come to expect — and they know they have paid for through their taxes, and sustain in the community — operations like the local office, the local MNR office, the local Ministry of Transportation office, are in fact being reduced. We are pleased, I suppose, that they haven't shut the ag office in Renfrew entirely, but if you're a farmer in Renfrew county, you know that in recent times the actual front-line

Ontario are keys to unlocking a future of prosperity, economic growth and job creation. As the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Noble Villeneuve, says, when Ontario's agri-food sector prospers, all Ontarians benefit.

The creation of Ontario Agriculture Week provides an opportunity for everyone in Ontario to celebrate the contributions of Ontario's agricultural communities and farm families. More importantly, it gives all of us an unsung heroes who provide us with the safe, sumptuous food we eat and many of the products we use in our daily lives.

After Harry Truman was elected to the presidency of the United States, someone went to his mother and said, "You must be very proud of your son." To this she replied: "I am, but I have another son who is just as fine. He's right outside plowing the fields."

I was born in Moorefield, Ontario, and raised on a farm. The hard work and dedication of my parents when raising our family was truly an example of what makes the farmers of Ontario great. My mother was a 4-H leader, secretary for many years of the Drayton Fall Fair board, farm correspondent and a leader of the Women's Institute, Farm Safety and the horticultural society. A special thanks to my father, Frank, who is 95 years old and a member of the Farmers Club, Farm Forum after we got a radio, Co-operators Insurance, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and is still a member of the Drayton Co-op.

Today I'm pleased and proud and humbled to be the representative of the riding of Perth. Close to 13% of the people in my riding are directly involved in agriculture and related service industries. When you compare that with the provincial average of 2.43%, you can see that Perth county truly represents an agricultural force in the province.

There are over 2,800 farms in county Perth and each of the hard-working people of my riding plant more than 427,000 acres of crops. In total, these farm families generate more than \$430 million in gross receipts.

I'd like to congratulate the farmers of Perth county and many other farmers across the province who are driving agriculture, the economic engine of Ontario, forward into the 21st century.

This proposed time of celebration in recognition of the farmers of Ontario is about more than the many individuals who are working to provide for us today; it's about the future as well.

As a one-time member of the Maryborough 4-H and the Wellington County Junior Farmers, I know the value of these programs and would like to congratulate all of the people of the province who participate in these worthwhile endeavours, particularly their leaders. The strong values and work ethic taught have always been a part of what makes Ontario great.

I look forward to the debate today and hope to have the support of all members of the Legislature. I see this as an opportunity to build momentum, ensuring that the hard

services and the people — and we are talking about people — are simply not as available as they once were.

Some of the whiz kids like to say, "Well, there's voice mail and there's the Net." Yes, those things are interesting and they're new-fangled, but if you're a farmer in Ross township or Westmeath township — and Harry Danford's you've come to expect those people to be available in the community. We see fewer and fewer of those people. Not to say that Harry's been our ag rep, but he knows of what I speak in that respect. He probably has been an ag rep, or all I know. Seriously, there is a real sense of loss and reduction as governments, not just provincially but federally, pull back from service delivery.

I was reading in our papers not too many weeks ago that I guess it was 75 years ago, Ontario prepared for an election. It was at a time when Mr Drury led a farmers' government. One of the stories in the Eganville paper a couple of weeks ago said that something like 1,000 people came out in Eganville in the summer or late spring of '923 to greet the farmers' Premier. Both MLAs were representatives of the farmers' party then in government. That was then, and I know it was a long time ago, but it's important for me to recall that there was a time when the farmers were so powerful in this province they could elect a government. We know there has been much urbanization and now much suburbanization to reduce the power of the farm vote.

I want to take this opportunity to observe something I did a year and a half ago when we were dealing with the latest redistribution bill. "Thanks to Mike Harris and his supporters, the farm vote in this province is being substantially reduced with the latest redistribution bill. Never in the history of the province will the farm vote count for as little as it will at the time of the next election."

I want to make it very plain that farmers who have, for a century and then some, had a very significant voice in the affairs of this province and its government will have even their representation in the next Legislative Assembly very substantially reduced because we passed the Fewer Politicians Act. Make no mistake about it, that redistribution bill represents a substantial shift of political power away from the farm communities and into the urban belt just around this great city in which we now live ourselves.

For the apologists of this government, when they go to the Women's Institute, when they go to the local farm fairs, I hope they're going to have an answer, because at the time of the next election, the farm vote in this assembly will be at an all-time low. Yes, you will say, "That is because the Mississaugas and the Anishinabes and the Newmarketers have grown tremendously," and that has to be recognized, but there was absolutely nothing in our redistribution bill to recognize the special situation in which rural and northern Ontario and themselves.

As I take my seat and give some of the remaining time to my good friend from Prescott and Russell, I just want to

say to the sponsor of this bill, the member for Perth, that we have managed to pass in this Parliament a redistribution bill that substantially reduces the representation and the very voice that his private member's bill properly wants to celebrate. That is a legacy of this Harris government, it is not a legacy of which we should be proud.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): I'm very pleased to be able to speak to this bill. Let me say at the outset that I support and appreciate the symbolic gesture that is being made here and I'll be voting for this bill. But in my view, it is absolutely essential to get on the record the more important things that go beyond symbolism, the things that have happened, and are happening right now, to farmers, to the farm community, to the rural community in Ontario.

I want to hark back to what the farm community did earlier this spring. The farm community joined together, 37 farm organizations joined together, to lobby the government to reinvest in agriculture. They weren't talking about symbolism, they were talking about real reinvestment in rural Ontario, real reinvestment in agriculture, real reinvestment in the people who work and make a contribution in rural Ontario. They lobbied government members and they lobbied opposition members.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): Yes, that's what they were doing. Spend more money, \$10 billion —

The Acting Speaker: Member for Grey-Owen Sound, would you please remain quiet.

Mr Hampton: Farm organizations put a great deal of effort into trying to talk to this government. They waited with great anticipation for the budget, hoping there would be a sign that the government was going to reinvestment in rural Ontario. They were sadly disappointed, very sadly disappointed. In fact, if I can quote Ed Segsworth, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, "We know they heard our message. We also know they chose to ignore our message." In other words, representatives of farm organizations, after speaking to cabinet ministers, knew that the government chose not to reinvest in rural Ontario. The government chose not to reinvest in rural Ontario.

Then there is the issue of what's happening through all of the provincial downloading. We know that virtually every rural municipality in Ontario has lost funding for roads and highways. We know that the rural economy, the farm economy, depends on being able to move the product to market. You can't move the product to market if roads and highways and bridges in rural Ontario are beginning to deteriorate. What has the government done about reinvestment in highway infrastructure, road infrastructure, bridge infrastructure in rural Ontario?

The sad story is the government has done absolutely nothing. It has thrown all these costs on to local municipalities. It has thrown all these costs directly on to rural residents, farm residents and said: "You're on your own. If you want to move your product to market, if you want to be part of the economy, you're on on your own. You increase your property taxes. You increase user fees. You

add in the continuing cuts to the budget, when you add in the fact that there are going to be far fewer representatives from rural Ontario in the next Legislature, what it says to me is that we're living in a situation where the government of the day chooses to ignore rural Ontario, chooses to ignore the food producers, the agricultural producers in this province. In fact, I would go so far as to say we're living in times when the government of the day chooses to take for granted people who live in rural Ontario, chooses to take for granted the agricultural producers of this province.

I support this bill. I will vote for it. But it must be said that this bill cannot cover, cannot make up for the neglect that has been shown to the people of rural Ontario and the agricultural producers of Ontario by the government of the day, and that is a shame, absolutely a shame. My colleagues will have more to say later.

1130

Mr. Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough): It is my pleasure this morning to rise and speak to this bill. I will try and keep my comments to this bill because in the very short time that we have in this House for private members, I will allow time for that.

I would like to begin by congratulating the member for Perth for bringing forth what I consider is a very important initiative. I'm particularly pleased that the member has chosen to designate the week beginning with Thanksgiving Day as Agriculture Week, since I feel it is in the harvest season that we should honour the hard work and dedication of farm families in the province.

In Ontario we have a lot to thank our farmers for. From the earliest French and Loyalist settlements along the St. Lawrence River, the Great Lakes, the Grand, the Thames the Detroit River and indeed the Niagara Peninsula farming has been the economic mainstay of hundreds of our communities. French and Loyalist farmers carved the farms out of the bush of Ontario, using the most primitive tools of agriculture: an ox, a horse, a pick, an axe and shovel. Working long hours in all extremes of weather and relying upon their family, their friends and neighbours for assistance, they cleared the forest at the rate of five acres per year for their homesteads. Over many generations they established the farming community in Ontario as we know it today. Indeed, many of our present-day farm families can proudly trace their roots to the early French settlers or the Loyalist migration from the United States.

As the farm community grew, so did many of the institutions of rural Ontario that are so familiar to us today, such as The Grange, the women's institutes, the 4-H clubs, as well as the towns and villages that grew to serve the early settlers' needs. Even our present political system owes its existence to the demands of the rural community for proper representation in the Legislature. Farming has grown so that now it is the second largest industry in Ontario. The member for Perth gave us statistics to support this in his comments earlier, but I think some of those statistics are worth repeating.

We generate over \$25 billion worth of economic activity and we employ over 640,000 people. In 199

support this kind of infrastructure. Then there's the question of the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I see reinvestment in rural Ontario, reinvestment in agriculture as a very broad issue. It takes into account transportation; it takes into account rural infrastructure. Part of that, as a subset of that, is the question of the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. What is interesting is what the MPP for Nipissing had to say when he was in opposition. He said that a Conservative government would restore the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. That was the message that was put out.

What have we seen in three years? Again, I want to get beyond the symbolism. What we have seen in three years, that's been the cut.

I simply want to say this. Even now, in 1998-99, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is going to absorb a further 3.5% cut in its budget when you factor in inflation. This is all incredibly short-sighted and, frankly, it's the wrong direction. If we want to be a player in the world agricultural and food market, these long-term investments have to be made. It's not just enough to bring forward a symbolic private member's bill saying, "We celebrate agriculture in Ontario." You have to put your heart into it. There has to be some substance to it.

Finally, I too want to speak about what farmers are going to find after the next provincial election. Twenty-seven seats in this Legislature are going to disappear. Of the 27 that are going to disappear, 22 of them are from rural Ontario. What farmers are going to find, what the residents of rural Ontario are going to find after the next election is that whatever voice they have had in this Legislature is going to be very much decimated after the next election.

I would say to you, when you add all of these things up: the downloading on to rural municipalities in terms of highway infrastructure, road infrastructure, bridge infrastructure, when you add in the absolute cut to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' budget, when you

Je crois que le gouvernement doit prendre les procédures nécessaires afin de protéger l'agriculture. Lorsque ça va être encore très difficile d'avoir des personnes qui vont siéger sur des comités d'urbanistes. Quand je dis «des comités d'urbanistes», c'est dû au fait que les municipalités auront peu de représentants du secteur de l'agriculture sur le conseil municipal. Le gouvernement devrait s'assurer qu'un municipalité dont un certain pourcentage sera évalué agricole s'assure à ce qu'un minimum de personnes faisant partie du comité d'urbanistes proviennent du secteur agricole.

Lors de la tempête de verglas, nous avons connu des périodes très, très difficiles, que nous connaissons encore. Je regarde des fermiers et des agriculteurs de fermes laitières, comme la ferme Cayer à St-Albert, qui a dû procéder avec des réparations d'au-delà de 80 000 \$ et où on attend toujours des compensations du gouvernement. Je regarde la ferme Kaisan, où on élève des chèvres; ils ont perdu au-delà de 160 chèvres durant le verglas. On attend toujours la compensation.

Mais pour cette tempête de verglas, et je ne sais pas si le gouvernement s'en rend compte, les coûts totaux qui ont été estimés vont dépasser un milliard de dollars. Ce n'est pas seulement durant le mois de janvier que nous allons reconnaître tous les problèmes auxquels nous allons être appelés à faire face dans les prochains 20 ans. C'est que déjà, cinq mois après le verglas, les agriculteurs doivent procéder à un changement de leur bétail, leurs animaux. Une vache laitière qui a dû faire face à des périodes de stress, aujourd'hui on s'en ressens. On doit procéder avec le changement de troupeaux puisque les animaux ont attrapé ce qu'on appelle la mammité; la viande ne peut plus être utilisée pour le boucher et le lait est réduit à 25 % et même encore plus, donc, des montants d'argent que nos agriculteurs vont être obligés d'aller chercher à la banque. Mais il faut se rappeler que depuis la tempête de verglas, les lignes de crédits sont rendues à la limite.

Mais je vais définitivement supporter ce projet de loi. C'est que surtout, le projet de loi provient d'un membre du gouvernement qui en reconnaît l'importance. Mais je crois que durant la semaine que nous allons décider de déclarer la Semaine des agriculteurs, nous allons faire une promotion. Quand je dis «une promotion», c'est que nous devrions encourager davantage les écoles à aller rendre

I'm going to say this part in English, Mr Speaker, because I think it's very important. During this week that we want to proclaim as Ontario Agriculture Week, we should stress that a certain number of schools should visit a farming community, should visit a dairy farmer. This would instruct them so they would recognize the importance of that the farming community is playing in our daily life. Without the farmers, without the dairy farmers, without the cash-crop people, we wouldn't be here today. We wouldn't be here today because they are the ones who built our country. I would say for the majority of us, either our parents or our grandparents were born and raised on a

Some 200 commodities are produced in Ontario. They include everything, and I won't go into the list. There are also 1,200 food and beverage processors that are located in Ontario, and that makes up almost half of that industry in Canada.

We all know that agriculture is more than food to eat and to be on our tables in front of us each evening. Cloth and textiles begin in the barnyard as wool and indeed in the fields as hemp. Hemp, while it's still an experimental crop, is also used to make paper and a variety of industrial products.

Flowers and ornamental plants: Certainly our greenhouse industry is thriving in Ontario. Last year, in 1997, already debated corn with a previous bill that was before us here this morning. Corn is involved in ethanol fuel, but it's also involved in soap, toothpaste, paint, varnish, parkings and so many other things we use every day and perhaps sometimes take for granted and really don't realize where they begin. These are only a few of the products produced by farmers in Ontario today.

Agriculture Week will give us all a chance to reflect on the debt we owe to Ontario's farmers and their forebears, to applaud their pioneering spirit and entrepreneurial zeal and to wish them even greater success in the future.

I urge all members of this House to support Bill 37 and the passage of Ontario Agriculture Week.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell) : C'est avec plaisir que je prends la parole sur ce projet de loi que je crois d'une très, très grande importance. Lorsque nous faisons de recommandations une semaine pour les agriculteurs d'Ontario, je crois que ça pourrait sensibiliser davantage ceux et celles qui ne comprennent pas le rôle important que ces agriculteurs ont à jouer dans cette province et dans ce grand pays.

Lors de la tempête de verglas, nous avons pu être sensibilisés davantage, mais j'aimerais dire au tout début que nous avons, dans ma circonscription, plus de 1250 fermiers, agriculteurs, et nous avons aussi une mise en valeur de plus d'un milliard de dollars en équipement et en infrastructure.

De plus en plus, avec les coupures ou le délestage que nous connaissons, surtout lorsque nous regardons l'annulation de la taxe agricole à laquelle nos municipalités devront faire face en 1998, que va-t-il devenir à nos agriculteurs, et aussi avec les fusions des municipalités ? Dans le passé, les municipalités n'étaient pas aussi grandes qu'aujourd'hui. Souvent, à plusieurs reprises, les municipalités qui faisaient partie du conseil. Mais aujourd'hui, plus en plus, ça va être très difficile pour ces agriculteurs de se joindre à un conseil municipal ou de se faire

farm, and today we are happy that the farmers are giving

us what we have today.

The sales in Prescott and Russell alone are over \$200

million a year, of which 81% comes from the dairy

farmers. Some other areas are either the cash crop, the

corn — if I go down to the Sussex area, it could be corn.

But once again I say this is a very, very important bill.

Je crois que nous allons pouvoir sensibiliser les

Ontariens et Ontariennes, Canadiens et Canadiennes, en

déclarant une semaine reconnaissant le rôle important que

jouent nos agriculteurs dans notre vie quotidienne.

Encore une fois, je crois que, dans tout comité où nous

affectons le développement, on devrait toujours consulter

les agriculteurs, les personnes qui se connaissent dans le

développement de l'agriculture.

I look at the disaster relief committee that was formed

for the ice storm, and I just wonder if we think of having a

representative of the agricultural community on that

committee. At the present time, if we had done that, the

farmers wouldn't be waiting like they are today to get

compensation.

Once again, I will support the bill, and I congratulate

the member for Perth.

M. Gilles Bissson (Cochrane-Sud) : Je ne vais prendre

qu'un couple de minutes parce que je sais que mon

collègue d'Algoma aimerait parler sur ce projet de loi, car

pour lui c'est une question très importante.

Je veux dire quelque chose au début. Beaucoup de fois

dans cette Assemblée, quand les députés francophones

partent, ils vont dire, «J'ai quelque chose d'important à

dire que j'ai besoin de dire en anglais.» Excuse-moi. On

est francophone. On a des affaires importantes à dire ; les

dire en français ou en anglais, ça m'est égal, mais

j'aimerais qu'on arrête cette pratique. Je pense que c'est

un oubli, puis je ne peux pas me passer de faire une

remarque, mais autrement, d'essayer de sensibiliser les

députés à cette question.

Je veux dire premièrement que j'appuie le projet de loi

du député. Je pense que c'est important. Je suis d'accord

que la communauté agricole est très importante à la survie

de l'Ontario pour beaucoup de raisons ; premièrement,

parce que c'est eux qui sont responsables de s'assurer que

la nourriture est produite pour nous, les consommateurs.

Enfin, les personnes qui ont besoin de manger. Sans

ça, on a de grands problèmes. Il y en a qui mangent moins

que d'autres, comme on le sait tous.

Deuxièmement, c'est une industrie très importante pour

l'économie de l'Ontario. Je pense qu'il faut le souligner.

Donc, je vais le supporter.

Je veux aussi dire je ne vais pas avoir la chance de

rester pour le vote, mais je veux être sur le record en

disant que je voterai pour. Je suis engagé à partir à midi

et après-midi, mais autrement je veux dire que oui, j'y

donne mon support.

J'aimerais faire un autre commentaire en ce qui

concerne le ministre de l'Agriculture. Le ministre,

M. Villeneuve, a trouvé le temps de venir ici à

l'Assemblée pour parler contre un projet de loi qui don-

nerait des protections aux francophones, un projet de loi

valuable animal manure.

produced large supplies of previously scarce and quite

were used to feed sheep. These crops eaten by livestock

turnips either fed cattle in open yards during the winter or

and rye were grazed or cut for feed in the fourth year. The

with clover and rye undersown, in the third. The clover

grown in the first year, followed by turnips, then barley,

British farms for the following 100 years. Wheat was

century, this system was the standard practice on most

Norfolk county, England, before the end of the 17th

important than the Norfolk four system. Few were more

European period in agricultural history, few were more

Of the many changes that took place during the

plowing and hauling.

its full strength, enabling it to do heavier work such as

the rigid, padded horse collar allowed the animal to exert

in the history of agriculture. Apparently invented in China,

The horse collar was another very important invention

with a crooked stick. Godspeed the plow."

long way together since our ancestors scratched the soil

civilization.... Agriculture and civilization have come a

basic instrument of agriculture, it is the symbol of

marked by the furrow of the plow. Not only is the plow the

"The pathway of the progress of mankind has been

of the Ontario Agricultural College, in 1957:

I wish to quote a statement from W.A. Young, chaplain

weeds.

up soil, bury crop residues and, of course, help control

deemed the most important agricultural implement since

estimated. One constant, however, is the plough. It's

erous places, many plants and animals have been dom-

no single or simple origin. At different times and in num-

griculture, with a history of up to 10,000 years, has

ernment usually allows.

knowledge and more patience than either God or gov-

it takes more business skill, more technical and scientific

but "the good life," but

are constantly at odds with our farmers.

Weeds, hail, drought and insects, the forces of nature,

We always seem to be equal part joy and struggle.

not easy, but as my aunt would say, it's good for the soul.

prosperous future of farming. We all know that farming is

would allow us to celebrate the heritage and the

Overall, this creation of Ontario Agriculture Week

County Fair and Horse Show.

riding of Norfolk, age week would parallel the Norfolk

already hosting their harvest and fall festivals. In my

in the fall, a time when many local communities are

farmers. This bill proposes to create an agriculture week

up to Thanksgiving is ideally suited to pay tribute to our

original intent of the member for Perth, the week leading

Mr. Toby Barrett (Norfolk): To go back to the

député. Qu'on aille en avant avec ce projet de loi.

A part ça, j'aimerais donner mes félicitations au

quelles sont ses priorités ?

parler pour la communauté agricole. Je me demande :

phones, mais il n'a pas eu assez de temps pour venir ici

intéressant, qu'il est venu ici parler des franc-

que j'avais présente, le projet de loi 17. Je trouve ça bien

In more recent years farmers have been forced to make changes to address world surpluses and low commodity prices. Farmers have therefore increased their productivity by adopting new technologies. The effect is an increase in farm size and a reduction in the number of farmers. The farm operated by a single family, however, remains the dominant model in most of the world. As we enter the 21st century, we should recognize that only at the beginning of the 20th century did farming become a way of making a living as opposed to being a way of life.

In the 1929 issue of the *Norfolk Agricultural Journal* of Agriculture of the day — John was born in Chesapeake of Honourable John S. Martin, local MPP and Minister in my riding — stated that no county had better prospects for the future than Norfolk, citing the rapid growth of area tobacco farming — the first tobacco crop was grown in our area in 1911 — and apple production with its attendant marketing organization. But he went on to say:

"While Norfolk is a county of specialists, it is, on the whole, a well balanced county.... Apart from its natural resources, Norfolk has a splendid asset in the spirit of the people. The enterprise and the readiness to cooperate on one of the big factors in our progress."

Farming in my riding of Norfolk has always been diversified. This 1929 issue describes the age-old menace to sheep production from dogs, although the author, T.B. Barrett, chairman of the sheep committee, states, "There are not nearly so many sheep-killing dogs in the county as there are chicken-stealing men." Chicken thieves — and I do not wish to reflect on anyone's family here.

I am proud to be part of the plan to initiate Ontario Agriculture Week. I believe this is a fitting tribute to those who work our land, raise our livestock and produce our food. I think Jimmy Allan, former MPP for Haldimand-Norfolk, a Dunnville lad, said it best when he stated, "Some skill in almost any trade can be acquired in a few months — learning to be a farmer takes a lifetime."

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I rise to support the bill put forward by the member for Perth and to congratulate him, although I ask, just as a matter of interest in passing, why he chose to make this a bill rather than a resolution, since the bill is almost all preamble with "whereases" rather than anything substantive. But to recognize the contributions of farmers by designating a week after Thanksgiving is supportable and symbolic, as my leader indicated. I would say, though, that we should be ensuring that the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs understands that there should be 52 weeks a year recognizing the importance of agriculture in the province rather than just one symbolic week after Thanksgiving.

Unfortunately I believe, as my leader indicated, that this government has turned its back on rural Ontario and on the farm community. I make one exception to that and recognize the contribution of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs in responding to the request of the local federation of agriculture and myself to ensure that the ag rep's office be maintained in Algoma and be moved

to the rural community. I accept that, but at the same time, as part of the overall cutbacks by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the pasture adviser's position has been eliminated, in an area which is mainly a cattle-raising area. That doesn't make a lot of sense.

When we see \$100 million cut from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs budget, we understand what importance this government puts on agriculture. When we see that, despite the promises of the leader of the Conservative Party to restore the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, this government has cut the budget more than any previous government, we understand the priority this government puts on agriculture.

With regard to the effect of this government's program of downloading on rural communities, when we see the cost of policing, ambulance, ground ambulance, public health, social services, roads, all the things that have been downloaded to the rural community, and we combine that with the changes this government made to the farm tax rebate system, all I can say is that farmers are going to see the taxes on their residence, as opposed to their farm buildings and farm lands, skyrocket because of the downloading this government has done in rural communities. This government has given grants to rural municipalities to get them over the next provincial election, but once that election is over, property taxes are going to go sky-high.

Mrs Barbara Fisher (Bruce): If I have any time left at the end, I'll be sharing it with the member for Durham East. I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of Bill 37, proposed by my colleague from the riding of Perth, Mr Bert Johnson. Bill 37 would designate the week before Thanksgiving as Ontario Agriculture Week.

As the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and as the member for the riding of Bruce, I certainly support this bill. It designates a week during the year to recognize and appreciate Ontario's farmers, farming families and those businesses and individuals involved in the agri-food sector. The magnitude of the agriculture and agri-food industry in Ontario is astounding. Many Ontarians will not be aware of the major economic force this industry represents in this province. We take for granted the thousands of farms we pass as we drive through Ontario on our way to work and on our way to vacations. Agriculture does more than just put food on your table. It is also the producer of a wide variety of products, such as clothing, textiles, paper, fuels and many others.

The greenhouse industry in Ontario is also thriving. In 1997, the value of greenhouse plant production was more than \$4 million. This creates year-round employment for Ontarians such as those employed by Bruce Tropical Produce, a 7.5-acre tomato greenhouse in Bruce township. Corn is produced into road de-icers, windshield washer fluid, ethanol fuel, soap, toothpaste, varnish and sparkplugs, just to name a few. Commercial alcohol in the riding of Bruce is a contributor to all of these, and this ties

in very well with this morning's previous bill by Jack

Carroll, Bill 34.

The figures and statistics related to the agriculture and agri-food industry are impressive and serve to remind us of the valuable contribution the agriculture sector makes to Ontario's economy. But let us not forget those who make this possible. Farmers and farming families are some of the most hardworking and dedicated workers in Ontario.

The land is their heritage. The family farm is not just a job to go to on a daily basis, it is a way of life and has been for hundreds of years. Often the family farm has been in the same family for generations.

Bruce county is well known for its strong agriculture character and heritage. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize just a few of the hardworking and dedicated farmers in Bruce county who, through their volunteerism in their associations, give back to the agricultural community. Some of these include the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, the Ontario francophone farmers, the Ontario Corn Producers' Association, the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, the Ontario pork producers, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, the Ontario Farm Safety Association, junior farmers' and 4-H clubs, the Canola Growers' Association and many others, many of whom are here today.

The struggles faced by Ontario's farmers are more challenging than many of us deal with on a daily basis. The success of the family farm depends on a favourable economic climate, strong markets and, last but not least, good weather. One ice storm, one hailstorm, one drought or one rainy season can make or break a farmer for an entire year or perhaps forever.

Ontario Agriculture Week is one way of expressing appreciation to Ontario's farmers. The food and other agricultural products upon which we depend are due to the hard work, skill and dedication of Ontario's farmers, their communities and their families.

We must also not forget our rural youth. Young people brought up in a farming family have extraordinary talents and skills which they acquire at a very young age and will use throughout their lives. The work ethic is developed early in these young people, who, as part of a farming family, are expected to contribute their share to the overall success of the farm, and they do it well. Employers lucky enough to hire these people for any type of job are usually well satisfied.

I would therefore encourage my colleagues in this Legislature to support this bill. I thank and commend my colleagues from Perth, Bert Johnson, for bringing the bill forward. Ontario Agriculture Week will provide an opportunity for Ontarians to celebrate the contribution made by Ontario farmers to the quality of life enjoyed by all Ontarians and to appreciate the significant impact the agri-food industry has on the economy of this province.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Perth, you have two minutes.
Mr Johnson: Ontario's agriculture industry has always been and continues to be an important part of the province's economy. Farming in Ontario dates back to

before the time that the first Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable John Graves Simcoe, had the land in Upper Canada surveyed for the purpose of establishing farming homesteads for the early Loyalist settlers.

The food and other agricultural products that sustain our lives are the result of the skill, hard work and dedication of Ontario's farming communities and farm families. It is important to recognize and acknowledge this ongoing contribution by Ontario farmers to the quality of life of all our citizens.

Thanksgiving Day is the annual day on which Ontarians express thanks for the bounties of the harvest. It is appropriate at that time to celebrate and acknowledge gratefully the contribution of Ontario's farm families in providing Ontarians with the food they eat and agricultural products during the fall and throughout the year.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the House who have taken the time to speak to the bill today, the members for Kenfrew North, Rainy River, Hastings-Peterborough, Prescott-Russell, Cochrane South, Norfolk, Algoma and Bruce. We all recognize, from parades, Big Bruce, who's trucked down nearly every small-town Main Street in Ontario.

I'd also ask all the members present to recognize the historic importance of agriculture in Ontario by supporting this bill. Ontario would not be the same without the contributions of Ontario farmers and farm communities. Let's start now to plan the celebrations for this fall. I look forward to your support later on.

The Acting Speaker: The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

AMENDMENT ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT

LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION

DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): We will deal first with ballot item number 19, standing in the name of Mr Carroll.

Mr Carroll has moved second reading of Bill 34, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): I'd like to request that the bill be referred to the standing committee on resources development.

The Acting Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 SUR LA SEMAINE

DE L'AGRICULTURE EN ONTARIO

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): We will now deal with ballot item number 20, standing in the name of Mr Bert Johnson.

Mr Johnson has moved second reading of Bill 37, An Act to designate a week of recognition for Ontario's Farmers.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth): Mr Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent that my bill, Bill 37, be ordered for third reading forthwith.

The Acting Speaker: Is it agreed? I heard a no. The bill will automatically go to committee of the whole.

All matters related to private members' public business having expired, I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 1:30.

The House recessed from 1201 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL

Ms Annamaria Castelli (Downsview): Today the government seeks second and third reading of a bill that would see the amalgamation of Sunnybrook Hospital and Women's College Hospital.

While I congratulate the many friends of Women's College Hospital who have fought long and hard to protect women's health, I say to you that this is not a happy day. I have said before that this government's programs have been a relentless attack on women. This legislation will now weaken its commitment to women's health.

Women's College Hospital came into being because women doctors needed a place to practise, because women wanted to be treated by women doctors and because research on women's health was inadequate. Much has changed since it came into being, but there's still much that needs to change in the area of women's health.

That is why a strong and independent Women's College Hospital is critical. Women's College Hospital is more than just a building. Its reputation is world-class. Its leadership in the area of women's health and research into women's health is undisputed both nationally and internationally. It is the only hospital in the western hemisphere designated as a World Health Organization collaborating centre in women's health. Only the Harris government fails to see the importance of this institution.

This bill proves their myopia.

The bill before the Legislature this afternoon represents a valiant effort by all those who care about women's health. I and others in my caucus applaud them for their extraordinary efforts in a difficult situation, but let me be clear: I can't support this bill, because they and women everywhere deserve more.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTING LICENCES

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Certified general accountants have been asking successive provincial governments to modernize the Public Accountancy

We believe that certified general accountants recognize that this government didn't create this problem but that it can demonstrate leadership by bringing change. They are willing to negotiate with other professional associations to develop a new licensing system. The Attorney General needs to announce that the monopoly in licensed public accounting must end, an announcement which would initiate a process by which the Certified General Accountants Association of Ontario, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario and the Society of Management Accountants of Ontario could meet and develop joint standards and procedures for licensing.

The Attorney General should tell the Legislature what plans the government has to modernize and amend the Public Accountancy Act to ensure that all qualified professional accountants — recognized by statute — with sufficient experience and knowledge are permitted to access public accounting licences.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): Last week I had the honour of representing the Minister of Health to present \$1 million to the Pembroke General Hospital. This money will relieve budget pressures faced by the first restructured hospital in Ontario.

The reaction by health care officials was very positive. However, we received a very unrealistic account of the financial situation from the member for Renfrew North. The member characterized operating expenditures as debt. Businesses do run lines of credit, especially on a budget of \$20 million. In fact, this hospital pools resources with other public partners to secure a rate below prime.

The ministry is addressing those expenses in three ways: the \$1 million I presented, a cash advance of \$2.4 million, and the hospital will submit a plan for reimbursement of costs. Also, the projected budget for 1998-99 shows a \$3-million wage and staffing increase.

The Ministry of Health also, as a result of its review of the conditions of long-term-care facilities, committed \$14.1 million to improve long-term care at Miramichi Lodge in Pembroke and \$4.2 million for Lakeview in Cobden.

I thank the Minister of Health for the honour of representing her on this important occasion.

The fact is that every day in our community, people needing a hospital bed come face to face with the fact that there is no room for them. The emergency halls are crammed with people who simply cannot be turned away, while many others needing care are directed elsewhere, sometimes to Manitoba, often to other hospitals in the north, all of which have the same space problem. Why is that? It's because the Health Services Restructuring Commission is forcing more bed cuts on our community, cuts that are simply leading to a crisis in acute care delivery.

Thunder Bay Regional Hospital is trying to get that message to you, Minister, as they have put together a proposal asking for funding for 20 temporary beds, beds that are absolutely crucial right now.

Minister, you must respond. This crisis in acute care services is not a made-up issue. It's real, and your officials know it's real. If you agree that people needing care in our hospitals should receive it, then you must recognize that your bed-cut targets are making people suffer and are truly dangerous.

Release the funds for those beds now. It's the responsibility of this government to provide quality care. Do not make people suffer any more.

1340

PAY EQUITY

Mrs Marlon Boyd (London Centre): The London and District Service Workers' Union, Local 220, is a local home workers throughout the London-Middlesex area. These workers in these nursing homes are still awaiting pay equity. They are still waiting for the payment that is due to them for equal pay for work of equal value, as provided in law by the Pay Equity Act.

Earlier this month, they sent invoices to the minister responsible for women's issues, who they thought might be interested in championing their cause. However, they did not hear back from them.

This box contains hundreds of these invoices indicating that the payment for pay equity is overdue and billing the employer, the Ontario government, for the amounts owing. I know that the minister responsible for women's issues must understand how important pay equity is and she would understand that many of these workers waiting for their pay equity settlement actually live in her riding and will be voters in the next election, so it is incumbent upon her to bring their plight to the attention of the Minister of Labour and to ensure that SEIU Local 220 gets its pay equity settlement as soon as possible.

WATERFRONT FESTIVAL AND FOLKLORAMA

Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte): On this last day at the Legislature sits before the summer recess, I would

like to invite each and every member of the House to attend the Belleville Waterfront Festival and Folklorama, held this summer on July 10, 11 and 12. Offering something for everybody, the Waterfront Festival and Folklorama has grown from a simple celebration of multiculturalism to one of the largest summer festivals of its type in Ontario.

Representing the various cultures and nationalities of the people who settled in the Quinte area, the ethnic pavilions offer food and entertainment from every corner of the globe. There are arts and crafts, the bathtub race and the belly-flop contest. Take the kids for a ride on the midway, see the water ski show and the fireworks. Just get kicks off the weekend celebrations.

The Waterfront Festival and Folklorama has some big-name music acts too, such as Trooper, Sass Jordan, Spirit of the West, Junkhouse, Colin James and Fifty-Four Forty. There is so much to see in the Belleville Waterfront Festival and Folklorama that it is hard to describe in the space of so little time.

The three-day celebration can be enjoyed for the price of \$5 for a shore pass, and children under 13 are free. I hope to see each and every one of you some time over the summer.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speakers' gallery today Mr Chandra Bhandari, consul general for India. Please join me in welcoming him.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I want to take this opportunity to tell the Legislative Assembly that this is the last day for the legislative pages. I want to thank them for their hard work, diligence and good service.

Applause.

The Speaker: Another standing ovation for the pages.

LEGISLATIVE USHERS

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I'd also like to inform the members that today is the last day in the House for many of our legislative ushers, Deon Cousins, Shereene Lindsay, Christeen Kivinen, Emma Hogbin, Mike Wood, Peter Smiechowksi and Gaurav Gupta have served us with enthusiasm and efficiency and I wish them well in their future endeavours.

Members will continue to see the familiar faces of Carla Mulligan and Peter McLeod, who will be continuing in their good services to us in the fall.

With the legislative session sitting in the 6:30 to 9:30 period, I'd like to thank the ushers personally for all the hard work and good work they did while we were in session.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS' EXPENDITURE REPORT

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I beg to inform the House I have today laid upon the table the individual members' expenditures for the fiscal year 1997-98.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Finally.

The Speaker: Finally, right.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill Pt19, An Act respecting the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LAW SOCIETY AMENDMENT ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE BARREAU

Mr Harnick moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 53, An Act to amend the Law Society Act / Projet de loi 53, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Barreau.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ASSURANCE-SANTÉ

Mr Duncan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 54, An Act to amend the Health Insurance Act to satisfy the criteria for contribution by the Government of Canada set out in the Canada Health Act / Projet de loi 54, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-santé pour satisfaire aux critères régissant les contributions du gouvernement du Canada et énoncés dans la Loi canadienne sur la santé.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): This bill amends the Health Insurance Act so that the Ontario health insurance plan satisfies the criteria set out in the

GREATER TORONTO SERVICES BOARD ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 SUR LA COMMISSION DES SERVICES DU GRAND TORONTO

Mr Leach moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 56, An Act to establish the Greater Toronto Transit Authority and to amend the Greater Toronto Transit Operating Authority Act / Projet de loi 56, Loi visant à créer la Commission des services du grand Toronto et à modifier la Loi sur la Régie des transports en commun de la région de Toronto.

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): Mr Speaker, I will be making a few comments during ministerial statements.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Bill 55, An Act to revise the Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act / Projet de loi 55, Loi révisant la Loi sur la qualification professionnelle et l'apprentissage des gens de métier.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

APPRENTICESHIP AND CERTIFICATION ACT, 1998

Canada Health and so that the province of Ontario qualifies for receiving the full cash contribution from the government of Canada described in that act.

Those criteria are public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility. We believe the federal government ought to reintroduce conditional health care grants to the province of Ontario and we look forward to working with them to do that, because we simply don't trust the government to spend that money on health care.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I just want to let the House know that this bill will establish a Greater Toronto Services Board that will ensure service coordination across the entire GTA and that the representation model that has been developed will ensure that all municipalities have a voice at the table.

I would also like to thank Mr Alan Tonks, who did a great job in moderating the draft legislation, with all of the stakeholders, that resulted in the production of this bill.

loi 59, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les suspensions de permis de conduire.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Bill Grimmer (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): This bill would amend the Highway Traffic Act to allow for suspension of a driver's licence upon conviction for impaired operation of a motorized vessel.

INCOME TAX AMENDMENT ACT
(EXPENSE ALLOWANCES OF MEMBERS
OF PARLIAMENT AND SENATORS), 1998
LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT LA LOI
DE L'IMPÔT SUR LE REVENU
(INDEMNITÉS DE FONCTIONS
DES PARLEMENTAIRES FÉDÉRAUX)

Mr Gilchrist moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 60, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act with respect to expense allowances earned in Ontario by Members of Parliament and Senators / Projet de loi 60, Loi modifiant la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu en ce qui a trait aux indemnités de fonctions gagnées en Ontario par les parlementaires fédéraux.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): Is it in order?
The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I'll have to read it later to find out.
Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Recognizing the fact that this government has had the courage and this Parliament has reflected the importance that we all pay tax on the full salary we earn, I think the final straw, the extra \$181-a-day allowance the senators have just given themselves, demands that, while the federal government members may have the power to waive the federal tax on their income, it's inappropriate that they relieve themselves of provincial obligations. This bill would rectify that.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES
APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): Earlier today I introduced for first reading the Apprenticeship and Certification Act, 1998.
This morning I visited with apprentices in the kitchens of the Royal York Hotel in Toronto. I met with three of 14 apprentices working in the kitchens, enjoying challenging, relevant training that will lead to vital, rewarding careers. I also met employers and educators who are committed to apprenticeship training and are convinced that the

pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I would simply like to thank two groups for assisting us in developing this legislation; first of all, Mr Don Wolan, president of the Brew on Premises Association of Ontario. The association has been very supportive of the legislation and has worked with us very closely to develop this, and I believe it will do a lot of good for the industry.

Second, I'd like to thank Frank Sheehan of the Red Tape Commission, who has certainly worked with our stakeholders and consulted with the industries out there to really ensure the viability of this industry.

LIQUOR LICENCE AMENDMENT ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES PERMIS D'ALCOOL

Mr Tsubouchi moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 57, An Act to amend the Liquor Licence Act in respect of brew on premise facilities / Projet de loi 57, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les permis d'alcool en ce qui concerne les centres de brassage libre-service.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I would simply like to thank two groups for assisting us in developing this legislation; first of all, Mr Don Wolan, president of the Brew on Premises Association of Ontario. The association has been very supportive of the legislation and has worked with us very closely to develop this, and I believe it will do a lot of good for the industry.

Second, I'd like to thank Frank Sheehan of the Red Tape Commission, who has certainly worked with our stakeholders and consulted with the industries out there to really ensure the viability of this industry.

Mr Gilchrist moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 58, An Act to amend the Ontario Heritage Act / Projet de loi 58, Loi visant à modifier la Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Very briefly, this bill would give greater powers to municipalities to reflect the importance of our cultural heritage by waiving the ability of anyone to demolish or renovate heritage buildings until such time as the appropriate bylaw had been repealed. It will go a long way to guaranteeing that buildings such as the Guild Inn in my riding are protected for future generations.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT

(LICENCE SUSPENSIONS), 1998
LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE
(SUSPENSIONS DE PERMIS)

Mr Grimmer moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 59, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to the suspension of drivers' licences / Projet de

meet the needs of our competitive economy. One message was repeated time and again during consultation with the apprenticeship partners. That message was, "We must move forward."

This is a message I heard from Charles Grieco, president of the Ontario Hospitality Institute; from Cosmo Mannello, of the Labourers' International Union of North America; from Ian Howcroft, director, human resources, Ontario division, the Alliance of Manufacturers and Exporters Canada; and from Gerald Fedehun, president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association. Some of these people are here today in the gallery of this Legislature. I ask members to thank them for their support of the apprenticeship reform.

Speaker, I wish we could thank all the employers, all the journeypersons, all the apprentices, all the educators and all the trainers who have contributed their ideas to this proposed bill. Thanks to their participation, we have a bill that should receive royal assent, would encourage employers to train and inspire our young people to become apprentices. We hope to double the number of new apprentices up to 22,000 from the current 11,000.

Through the support of partners in apprenticeship training, and through the legislation I have introduced today, we can help a new generation of skilled workers share in our province's prosperity and keep our economy strong.

Mr. Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I waited in the hope that the information I had was wrong, that the Minister of Municipal Affairs introduced two important pieces of legislation, or one that makes two changes, and we've yet to see a statement. So I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to have the Minister of Municipal Affairs make a statement with respect to the introduction of the Greater Toronto Services Board Act.

The Speaker: Unanimous consent? Agreed? No. Mr. James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to —

Interruption.

Mr. Bradley: I'm trying to be helpful here, as the government whip would know.

I want to ask for unanimous consent for the minister of privatization to make a statement in the House about what he's going to do tomorrow to TVO.

The Speaker: Minister? Agreed? No. Mr. David Caplan (Ortioro): I am pleased to respond to the minister's remarks, which I would add are long overdue. It has been six months since the minister's announcement in January that he was going to implement reform of the apprenticeship system so that he could send a positive message to our young adults about to enter the skilled trades sector. I am concerned that now that we are finally getting some directions from the government, instead of giving young people the right messages, the minister is in fact sending the wrong ones.

Let's look at the minister's messages in this legislation today. His first message makes it more difficult for young people to be able to afford to enter the trades and for

apprenticeship training system must change to meet the challenges of today and the 21st century.

That is what the proposed Apprenticeship and Certification Act, if passed by the Legislature, would do. Proposed changes to apprenticeship legislation would create work and learning opportunities for thousands of people in Ontario, particularly our young people. The Apprenticeship and Certification Act, if passed by the Legislature, would encourage more employers to train apprentices and would provide a framework for more young people to get involved in apprenticeship training.

Developed in consultation with our partners in apprenticeship training, the bill would provide a framework for a more relevant training system. It would give industries greater flexibility to meet unique training needs. It would provide flexibility with the flexibility to introduce apprenticeship training to new sectors, such as high technology or agriculture. It would ensure that training continues to be of a high standard, providing quality and safety to consumers, employers and workers.

If this bill receives royal assent, it would complement reform in our high schools. It would help young people to find the information they need to consider careers in skilled trades.

It would provide a new framework for a strengthened Ontario youth apprenticeship program. This program helps students understand the relevance of what they learn in the classroom to what they may do in the workplace. It helps young people make the critical transition from school to work.

The Ontario youth apprenticeship program is one of the programs offered by the Ministry of Education and Training and it's offered through Youth Opportunities Ontario. That is the government's strategy for promoting training and employment services to our young people. In addition to providing more young people with opportunities to participate in apprenticeship training, I announced in January that the government will be implementing tuition and financial assistance.

Tuition and the financial assistance required by apprentices will be introduced after Ontario completes negotiations on training with the federal government. The new funding model for the apprenticeship training system must reflect what the two governments have agreed to on training.

We will implement tuition and financial assistance in a managed way. Employers, apprentices and trainers will receive at least three months' notice when we do implement tuition and financial assistance. The Ontario youth apprenticeship program students will be exempt from tuition fees, as well as other administrative fees recently introduced to the apprenticeship training system.

If we were to act now, in advance of an agreement, our apprentices might not incorporate all the possible benefits to apprentices that could flow from such an agreement. The current apprenticeship legislation and training system has served some sectors well. We know, for example, of the high quality of training in the construction industry. Today, the system's regulations are too rigid to

people in the trades to continue their training. The minister says he wants to make the trades attractive, yet he is guaranteeing that the wage rates will drop by removing provisions from the legislation that protect apprentice wage rates. Instead of saying to young people, "I want you to consider spending a few years getting education in the skilled trades sector and I will guarantee that this will be affordable," the minister says, "I see no reason to protect your wages while you learn."

What message is he sending to those apprentices already in their training? The average age of the apprentice entering the program is 27. These young people have obligations, obligations to their unmanageable student debts that they have already accumulated, to mortgages, to young families. Now the minister is saying, "Despite what you expected, you can now plan on competing your training for significantly lower wages." That is not the message that we should be sending to these highly skilled young adults who are trying to extend their education and start a new career.

What about the new costs? This morning at a press conference the minister confirmed that he is still serious about bringing in tuition fees for the apprenticeship program. I hope that all young people contemplating entry into the trades will be wary of this. Mike Harris's record of skyrocketing tuition fees and inadequate student assistance programs are well known.

This government cannot be trusted to give our students an affordable education. The minister fails to mention that his own government's consultation showed that when tuition fees were added to program requirements, participation rates would drop significantly. And still he contemplates bringing in tuition fees. What kind of message is that? We should not forget that the minister never acknowledges the trades that already support their own training through a contribution of a portion of wages. Let's look at the message that the minister is sending to industry and labour about the value of his supposed consultations. This government says they consult, but they never listen. They started the consultation process in December 1996 on apprenticeship reform, but before the consultations were concluded, he leaked a document called New Directions. It was signed off by nine assistant deputy ministers. The minister and this government have not changed their tune since then.

In January, the minister said to industry and labour that he was serious about strengthening the roles of the provincial advisory committees, and we agree. We know now that this is not true. The PACs don't want to make any recommendations that they cannot enforce. Where is the real strengthening of the role? It's now apparent that the message the minister was trying to send out was one of tip-service and not real respect for the role that industry and labour could play together in the expansion and enhancement of apprenticeship programs. The minister will need the goodwill of all stakeholders in this process to make it work. This legislation proposed when he removes the legislated journey person's ratio from the new bill? Ratios are in place to ensure that apprentices

are adequately supervised and that safety on the job site is not compromised. Industry and labour were clear that to preserve a quality learning environment, you need to maintain the ratios and not scrap them. What are you saying to schools? You want them to counsel students to participate in the program, yet because of your funding formula and your Bill 160, boards across Ontario are being forced to cut back on guidance programs. We know there are going to be fewer teachers in the system and that these teachers are going to be taking on more students. You're asking an awful lot without providing adequate resources. My final concern is a message that the minister is not sending. He will not say what he will do about the minimum educational requirements. Industry and labour say they want higher standards, not lower. Studies in BC show that students who have completed high school have the highest success rate in apprenticeship programs. I am not confident about this government's ability to effect positive change. I am disappointed that the minister will not put his money where his mouth is and give real substance to the apprenticeship program, a real role for PACs, not leaving it up to his colleagues in cabinet —

The Speaker: Responses

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): It's been months and months since the minister announced with great fanfare that he was bringing in changes to the apprenticeship training act. We wonder, if the government thinks that this is such a high priority, why it would wait until the last day of the session to introduce this piece of legislation. We suspect that a lot of the stakeholders that the minister says that he's been consulting with have probably been telling him that the changes that he was going to be bringing in weren't good for apprentices or for skilled trades or for workers, or for industries, for that matter.

Just a couple of weeks ago there were hundreds of construction trades workers who were demonstrating in front of the minister's office before they even knew that this legislation was going to be introduced. That was before they knew the government was going to be introducing Bill 31, labour legislation that was going to be taking away their hard-won rights, rammed through this Legislature in a mere 19 days.

I think the government's spin masters were having a bit of a hard time coming up with a package that people were going to be able to swallow on the introduction of this legislation, so this morning we saw the minister down at the Royal York Hotel put on an apron and try to sugar-coat the bitter taste of this legislation by putting some sweet icing on the cake. He found \$1.4 million to give to school boards for co-op education. We have no problem with expanding opportunities for high school students, but we're going to be watching very carefully to ensure that the minister doesn't denounce this funding as non-classroom spending and then take credit for cutting it.

1410

The minister brought in this legislation with the excuse that the current act hasn't been updated since 1964. But

members when I say that one abused child is one too

many.

Sheldon Kennedy was one of those children. A National Hockey League player, who was a hero to many for his skill on the ice, he took the courageous step of going public off the ice with his personal story of abuse at the hands of his junior league coach. Sheldon has now made it his crusade to raise public awareness of these crimes, and for that he deserves our support and our

congratulations.

Thirty-one per cent of boys and 21% of girls in Ontario suffer physical abuse, and 4.5% of boys and 12% of girls in Ontario suffer sexual abuse. According to Dr Brenda Watie of the Ontario Children's Mental Health Committee, the risk of suicidal behaviour has been found to increase five times if a child has been physically abused, five times if there has been sexual abuse, and nine times if both physical and sexual abuse have been present.

Eighty-five per cent of the young runaways in Toronto have been sexually abused.

Eighty per cent of female prisoners were physically or sexually abused as children.

Thirty-three per cent of sex offenders experienced sexual trauma as a child.

Ninety-nine per cent of our child prostitutes nine years of age and up were at one time abused.

The reported incidence of child abuse has doubled in the past five years.

Sheldon Kennedy, a man of great courage, will be in-line skating from one end of the country to the other to raise awareness of child abuse and sexual assault against children. He will be in Ontario during the month of July.

On behalf of the Ontario Liberal caucus and the people we represent, I would like to offer him my congratulations and my heartfelt support.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): I would like to join in recognizing the efforts of Sheldon Kennedy, most of all to recognize the incredible personal courage that Sheldon Kennedy has shown. To come forward as he did and to come forward in the environment he did and make the disclosures that he did were certainly incredible acts of personal courage that, I would argue, should serve as examples for all of us and should serve as examples for government most of all.

The fact of the matter is that when Sheldon Kennedy made the decision he made, he was swimming against the tide in terms of the kind of environment he works in and the kinds of attitudes he had to overcome. I think that Sheldon Kennedy, by now taking on this campaign that he is conducting from one end of Canada to the other, is challenging all of us to recognize that there is a very serious issue, that all of us, individually and collectively, must recognize this issue, and that all of us, individually and collectively, must make a contribution, first, to the awareness and, second, to address the issues that are being raised.

I hope that all members of the Legislature this summer, as Sheldon Kennedy makes his way across this country, will take the time to recognize the unique effort, the

what we've been hearing from people like Wayne Samuelson from Ontario Federation of Labour and Bob

Chernacki from the Canadian Auto Workers is that, by and large, this is legislation that has been working fairly well. The Mike Harris government has been consistent in its attacks on unions and workers in Ontario and this announcement today is really a smokescreen for your

attempts to drive down wages and lower government's commitment to funding of apprenticeship.

We do need to expand opportunities for young people but we shouldn't be misleading high school students into dropping out. It's clear that what you are doing is eliminating regulations respecting minimum wages and the journeyman-to-apprentice ratios and leaving it to industry to set those standards. We think that's wrong and we think it's going to lead to lower wages. It's going to water down the standards, lower the quality of training, expose workers to unsafe work conditions and also cause consumers to be concerned about anything that threatens the quality of workmanship.

Minister, if you were serious about expanding and improving apprenticeship, you wouldn't be lowering wages, you wouldn't be making apprentices pay tuition and you wouldn't be increasing fees, deregulating standards or cutting funding. And that's right, Minister, we're talking about cutting funding here. You're right to complain about the federal Liberal government cutting funding for apprentices, but your own estimates say that in 1996-97 actual spending was \$94 million and that the estimates for 1998-99 are \$58 million. That's a cut of \$36 million in two years for the government's spending on apprenticeship and training.

I'm not surprised that you tried to make the announcement in the way that you did this morning, by putting the icing on the cake to make this bill look like something that it isn't. But we know what it is: Workers, apprentices and students will recognize this as a frame-work for lower standards, for lower wages, for increased fees for students who want to undertake opportunities in apprenticeship training, and we don't think that is the right direction to be going in.

CHILD ABUSE

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent of the Legislature for a statement to recognize and support the efforts of Sheldon Kennedy to raise awareness of child abuse and sexual assault against children in

Canada.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Agreed?

Agreed.

Mr McGuinty: Child abuse is a crime with lifetime and sometimes tragic effects for the young victim. Studies have taught us that children who have suffered abuse are at higher risk of having psychiatric problems, health problems and addiction problems. These children are more likely to commit crimes, attempt suicide, drop out of school or become unemployed. I am sure I speak for all

The Speaker: All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

AYES	
Parker, John L.	Guzzo, Gary J.
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Hardeman, Ernie
Ross, Lillian	Hamrick, Charles
Runciman, Robert W	Hastings, John
Sampson, Rob	Hodgson, Chris
Shea, Denwyn	Jackson, Cameron
Smith, Bruce	Johnson, Bert
Snobelen, John	Johnson, David
Spina, Joseph	Kellis, Morley
Sterling, Norman W.	Klees, Frank
Stewart, R. Gary	Leach, Al
Tascona, Joseph N.	Leadson, Gary L.
Tilson, David	Marland, Margaret
Tsoubouchi, David H.	Martiniuk, Gerry
Tumbull, David	Maves, Bart
Vankoughnet, Bill	McLean, Allan K.
Villeneuve, Noble	Munro, Julia
Wilson, Jim	Murdoch, Bill
Wood, Bob	Mushinski, Marilyn
Young, Terence H.	Newman, Dan
	O'Toole, John

The Speaker: All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

NAYS	
Marlin, Tony	Curling, Alvin
McGuinty, Dalton	Duncan, Wright
McLeod, Lynn	Gravelle, Howard
Morrin, Gilles E.	Hampton, Michael
Patten, Richard	Kormos, Peter
Phillips, Gerry	Kwinter, Monte
Pouliot, Gilles	Lalonde, Jean-Marie
Ruprecht, Tony	Larkin, Frances
Slippo, Tony	Lessard, Wayne
Wood, Len	Martel, Shelley

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. Desrosiers): The ayes are 63; the nays are 33.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In view of the announcement today that Alan Eagleson is being granted parole as of July 7, only one third of his sentence being served, I seek unanimous consent to address the matter by all three parties, hoping that the members of the Crime Control Commission will comment on this early release of Alan Eagleson.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Agreed? No.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AIR QUALITY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. It's 30 degrees outside, it's hot, it's humid and it's another smog alert day in Ontario. You have been talking about

incredible effort, the valuable effort that is being made and to do what we can, in whatever way we can, to further the efforts of Sheldon Kennedy and to further the public understanding of what he represents and what he is trying to do.

Hon Isabel Bassett (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): I rise also to salute the courage in the face of adversity, to rise above the situation and turn it to the good of other Canadians and youth. I'm speaking, of course, of Sheldon Kennedy, who has made it his life's work to raise awareness about sexual abuse and to find the resources needed to develop a treatment and research centre for abused children.

Currently, Mr Kennedy is in-line skating, as you've heard, right across Canada to promote this crucial cause. He is to be in Ontario from July 5 to July 11, and I want him to know that this government supports his work. We support him entirely. I wrote to him in May wishing him well on his venture and on his cause, and I plan to meet find time in their busy schedules to talk to Sheldon Kennedy.

I want to emphasize that this government is committed to fighting sexual abuse and to working in every way possible to ensure that Ontarians have a safe and accessible sport environment, one that is free from sexual abuse. To this end, the government has been working with its amateur sports partners on various fronts. We have distributed a video called Good Sports Don't Hurt, Harassment Does to all of our provincial sport and recreation organizations.

I know all members of this House will join me in wishing the very best to Mr Sheldon Kennedy.

DEFERRED VOTES

TAX CUTS FOR PEOPLE AND FOR SMALL BUSINESS ACT, 1998 LOI DE 1998 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES IMPÔTS DES PARTICULIERS ET DES PETITES ENTREPRISES

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 15, An Act to cut taxes for people and for small business and to implement other measures contained in the 1998 Budget / Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à réduire les impôts des particuliers et des petites entreprises et à mettre en oeuvre d'autres mesures contenues dans le budget de 1998.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): There will be a five-minute bell. Call in the members.

The division bells rang from 1421 to 1426.

We have revamped and are in the stages of revamping some 70 air quality standards which have been left neglected by previous governments for some 20 years. To revise these particular standards is a very important and difficult process in order to reach what is best for our people. We have done more with regard to air quality than any previous government has ever done.

Mr McGuinty: Here's what our own environmental commissioner said: "If we continue down this government's path, our right to a healthy environment will be jeopardized. We can't afford to focus on short-term savings at the expense of our long-term environmental health." You were the one who told us in October of 1996 that 1,800 people die in Ontario every year as a result of breathing bad Ontario air.

Now, when it comes to the Drive Clean program, I've given up on that. You're not going to proceed with that. But there's something else that you should do and you could do, and it doesn't cost a lot of money and it doesn't take a lot of work. You could put in place a provincial smog alert plan. The city of Toronto has one on the books. They limit certain kinds of activities like grass cutting, paving and use of pesticides. The problem, as you know or should know, is that pollution and smog do not respect municipal boundaries.

Will you know commit to implementing a province-wide smog alert emergency program?

Hon Mr Sterling: We are going to implement the Drive Clean program. We will do it, as opposed to your government's previous record when these emissions-control programs were in place in the United States, and notwithstanding what happened with regard to the last government's efforts in this regard. We are going to implement this program. We are going to do it.

We have done many things with regard to addressing the smog problem. Another part that I'd like to clarify is reducing the precursors to smog through a variety of measures.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer, please. **Hon Mr Sterling:** We also participate in providing the information to cities like Toronto to allow them to predict when smog is approaching and to incur —

The Speaker: Thank you.

TUITION FEES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Education. You've been busy this session wreaking havoc on the lives of our college and university students. The other day I met a Queen's University student, and he told me that his first-year poli-sci program, an undergrad program, cost him \$2,500 in tuition fees. This coming September his tuition fees will be \$3,800. When you add on top of that \$400 in ancillary fees, that's \$4,200, and he's lucky enough to live in the city of Kingston.

your Drive Clean program. Your predecessor first talked about your Drive Clean program in October 1995. We had mistakenly assumed that that meant we would have it in place for the summer of 1996. That came and went, but still no program. We thought then that maybe you'd have it in place for the summer of 1997 — nowhere to be found. We thought that at least you'd have it in place for this summer, the summer of 1998, but apparently that's not going to be the case either.

It's not that you can't move quickly when you want to. It took your government no time at all to cut your ministry staff by 30%, no time at all to cut your budget by 45%. Minister, why don't you simply stand now and admit that the Drive Clean program is not a priority for you and it will not be in place at all during the summer?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I believe last year we announced that we were going to have a Drive Clean program. It was never held out to the public nor this Legislature that the program would be in place by the summer of 1998. It is a very comprehensive program. It involves a major contract with the private sector, which we are now negotiating, which could amount, over the term of the contract, to hundreds of millions of dollars. We want a program which will be effective, which will get the reduction in emissions that we are aiming for. We believe this program will be sound, will be solid, will be all-encompassing and will in fact improve the air for the people of southwestern Ontario in the future. It's a very important program and we're implementing it in a very careful and cautious manner.

Mr McGuinty: The Drive Clean program and the protection, preservation and enhancement of our natural environment are not priorities for your government. Why not have the honesty to stand up and say that? You've moved forward on so many different fronts and you've brought about so much change in Ontario, but you have either done nothing on the environmental front or you have gone in reverse. Why not just stand up and say: "It's not a priority for us. You'll have to look to another government to do that kind of stuff?"

Let's talk about some of your priorities when it does come to the environment. You have increased the allowable discharges of pollutants into our lakes and rivers. You have dropped the fine for our polluters from a high of \$3 million to \$955,000. That's the lowest total of fines in our province since 1985. That's what you've done. One thing you could do and the one thing you promised to do was to give us the Drive Clean program. Why don't you stand up — again I'm giving you this opportunity — and tell us that you're not going to do it because it's not a priority?

Hon Mr Sterling: We have done many things with regard to changing the whole environmental paradigm and improving our regulatory regime, improving many of the processes so that things can get done in this province. We have lowered the gasoline volatility regulations, as I've said here before. We have for the first time set particulate standards in this province, which was never done before.

You have increased tuition fees for our undergraduates by 60% in Ontario. You have deregistered tuition fees for people in professional and post-graduate programs.

Minister, what have you got to say to the student who said this: "I wonder how anyone could expect someone from a lower socioeconomic background to buy an education with a price tag of \$80,000 debt at the end of it?" That's a young articling student. What have you got to say to that student?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training):

What I would say to that student and all students within the system is that there has never been a better time to get into post-secondary education in the province of Ontario. In fact, the numbers of those participating in post-secondary education are going up. I'd say that the opportunities are there.

This government, by doubling the pipeline at the universities and at the colleges in the high-tech area, as one example, by investing \$150 million in our post-secondary institutions, there will be more and more opportunities for students who have been turned away in the past.

Second, I would say that there has never been more financial assistance for the very kind of person that the Leader of the Opposition describes, for those who need assistance: \$600 million from the Ontario opportunity fund instituted by this government. Never before in Ontario have we had the opportunity trust fund, \$600 million, to assist. And I would say that if any university does put up its tuition, as apparently in this case, 30% of that money must be set aside —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: I'm going to suggest that the minister get in touch with some of our students and some of their families and ask them whether they believe you have made post-secondary education more or less affordable in Ontario, because they're going to tell you very clearly that you have not.

It seems very clear to me, painfully clear, that you don't understand the connection between the affordability of college and university and the sustained prosperity of our province. If our young people do well, we do well. If our young people can afford to go on to college and university, that's in our collective interest. You are making it harder and harder for them to go on to college and university.

Do you know how much a student is going to have to make this summer to pay for one year of undergraduate education at the university level in Ontario? Twenty-five dollars an hour. I want you to stand up, because there are a lot of students listening now. They want to know where they can find the jobs that pay \$25 an hour this summer so they can afford to go to one year of university this September.

Hon David Johnson: I'll tell you what I understand about our students, and this is no different today than it has been through the years: Students want a quality program at our post-secondary institutions. They want a

Mr McGuinty: The record is very clear and it speaks for itself. We have the lowest level of funding per capita in the entire country when it comes to our universities, and you put us there. Right now we have the second-highest tuition fees in the country, but you're working hard to put us into first place, to ensure that Ontario students, our young people, move to the head of the class when it comes to paying the most for their college or university education.

And something else: Did you know that students this summer are not letting go of their apartments? Do you know why? Because you never stood up on their behalf in this Legislature and spoke out against the rent decontrol bill. They understand that if they leave their apartments, those rents are going to skyrocket when they come back to school in September. So their tuition fees are going up, and now they've got to contend with exorbitant rents.

All we can conclude from this is that you're not there acting in the best interests of students in this province to ensure that post-secondary education remains affordable and accessible to everybody. Stand up and admit that a priority for the Mike Harris government.

Hon David Johnson: What I'll do is stand up and relate the facts. If we're talking about accessibility, if we're talking about the participation rates of our students in our post-secondary institutions, let's have a look and see what it is. In 1989 — is that a year that rings a bell? That's the year of the Liberal government. After four years of Liberal government, let's have a look at the participation rate for 18- to 24-year-olds: 26.6%. What is it today, after three years of Progressive Conservative government? It's 35.1%.

If the issue is accessibility, there are more young people today going to our post-secondary institutions than ever before and there is more assistance today, more assistance generated by this government to help those students get the very education they deserve.

AIR QUALITY

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Air pollution is so bad today that an air quality advisory has been issued for most of Ontario. We could call it another Harris bad-air

question is a question about this precinct and about the people working at this precinct, and the minister has no jurisdiction over the employees of —

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): You don't know. You haven't seen the picture.

The Speaker: Member for Beaches-Woodbine, I'm not here to debate the issue. Can you stop the clock, please. The fact is, the minister has no jurisdiction over the employees who work in or outside this building so it is not a proper question to put. I will give the floor back to the leader of the third party if you want to pursue a different line, but that is not an appropriate line.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a quick point of order, Speaker, to help out: Would it be possible for the member to ask the question in a general sense, whether there could be a province-wide regulation that would govern this?

The Speaker: You know what? The member has got a lot of options available and I'm certain he can figure one out.

Mr Hampton: Let me try again to state —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr Hampton: Speaker, I would appreciate it if you would try not to censor these photographs and the information without having seen them. The important issue here, Speaker, is this: Cities across southern Ontario —

The Speaker: Is this a question or are you asking me a question?

Mr Hampton: No, I'm asking a question. I'd like very much to get my question in, Speaker.

Ms Lankin: The Minister of Transportation isn't in this precinct.

The Speaker: Member, I can only say to you that a question about the operation of the precinct is —

Ms Lankin: You don't know what —

The Speaker: Member for Beaches-Woodbine, come to order. Thank you.

What I'm saying to the leader of the third party is that you may produce these pictures and ask questions about a number of issues, but questions about the operation of this precinct are not a proper question to put to a minister. You may ask the Speaker, because that's my responsibility.

Whether the ministry staff is working here — we could be contracting them to work here. It's not a proper question to put to the minister. Thank you. Now go ahead.

Mr Hampton: Speaker, I will read from the government's own air quality advisory, if you'll permit me to do it.

The Speaker: You know what? Leader of the third party, I'm seeing you as a challenge to the Chair and I'm warning you now not —

Mr Gilles Poulriot (Lake Nipigon): He didn't challenge the Chair. You didn't answer the question.

The Speaker: Member for Lake Nipigon, I'm going to name you if you don't come to order.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): Why don't you go and have a glass of water?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): As I indicated to the Leader of the Opposition, our government is doing a number of things with regard to air quality in this province. As indicated before, we are looking at the air quality standards for the province of Ontario, making them tougher, to ensure that when we're faced with this kind of weather we are going to be able to deliver to the people of Ontario better air quality.

When we face a day like today we ask our government vehicles to be driven very much less, we encourage our employees to take alternative transportation and in fact we put into place a similar program that the city of Toronto has done with regard to the emergency or smog alert. I am very thankful that this city has taken that kind of leadership in this area.

Hon Mr Sterling: I also encourage other municipalities, because smog tends to be an air quality problem of a local nature and therefore it is very important that cities —

The Speaker: Supplementarity.

Mr Hampton: Let's get to the facts. You can't get your so-called Drive Clean program off the ground because you've laid off so many employees and so many scientific experts in your ministry that you don't have the expertise to do it any more. Your so-called clean air program we found out will take 17 years to implement, and then we'll only get a 45% reduction. Further, you say that you've implemented some of the things that the city of Toronto has done. We sent our video crew out today and, gee, here are government of Ontario people out using gasoline engines to mow the lawn.

The Speaker: It's a prop.

Mr Hampton: I guess showing a photograph is not allowed any more in the Ontario Legislature. Anyway, I'll be glad to show the press, because every one of these pictures shows visibly that what you just said is false and that in fact you are doing nothing in a practical day-to-day sense to reduce smog.

The Speaker: Question?

Mr Hampton: You are out there using diesel engines, gasoline engines and a variety of other air-polluting sources on a day when you shouldn't be using any according to your own air quality advisory. What are you going to do —

The Speaker: Leader of the third party, I appreciate the question you're asking but it's not in order. The

The Speaker: Member for Cochrane North, I'm going to name you too. Please come to order, members of the third party.

Mr Pouliot: Name everybody.

The Speaker: I name the member for Lake Nipigon.

Mr Pouliot was escorted from the chamber.

The Speaker: Leader of the third party, I'll give you the floor —

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On a point of order, Mr

Speaker: With respect, to have a member of the House

stand and ask permission to put a question — I don't

understand how you interpret that as a challenge of the

Chair. Surely a member has the right to stand and —

The Speaker: Member for Algoma, with great respect

— if you'd take your seat, please — I cautioned the

member for Lake Nipigon and I also cautioned the leader

of the third party. I appreciate the fact that you don't agree

with my ruling, but my ruling was very clear. There could

be a million reasons for what is happening where the

picture is taken, but that's how I see the situation.

Now, either we move on and continue — and I see the

comments made by the leader of the third party afterwards

as being condescending to the Chair as well. I don't think

anyone else could see it any other way.

I suggest to the leader of the third party that you may

put your supplementary question, but if it's about the

operation, the workings around or within the precinct, it's

not properly before this House. Thank you.

Mr Hampton: The government's own air advisory

reads: "You can reduce air pollution by driving less and

avoiding the use of gas-powered equipment, solvents,

aerosol sprays and oil-based paints." I heard the Minister

of the Environment say that the government has advised

government employees and other people who are associ-

ated with the government to do these things. I merely want

to say that we sent a video crew out today and it would

appear that this government, despite what the Minister of

the Environment has said, is carrying on business as usual,

using all kinds of aerosol sprays, diesel engines, gas-

oline engines when they don't need to be used. This

government is not even following its own air quality

advisory.

As I've said, and I put this question to the minister, we

know that your Drive Clean plan can't get off the ground

because you've laid off anybody in your ministry who

used to have the capacity to implement it. We know that

your so-called air quality plan won't get off the ground for

17 years, and even then will only provide a 45%

reduction. Other jurisdictions in this province are doing

practical things to protect the air. What are you doing?

Hon Mr Sterling: If the leader would get some of his

facts straight he would find out that our Drive Clean

program is going to be implemented by the private sector

and has nothing to do with the staffing levels of the

Ministry of the Environment or any other ministry. As the

Speaker has outlined, whatever happens in this legislative

precinct is not within my control or any other cabinet

minister's control.

government talked, talked, talked.

and rejected it. Our government is doing things. Your

government is that they considered a Drive Clean program

The difference between our government and their

previous governments never thought about.

measuring our air quality in this province, something that

\$300,000. This monitoring bus is an active, useful tool in

monitoring bus that this province has ever had, at a cost of

I also earlier this week unveiled the first mobile air

Commute Week with the Pollution Probe organization.

the Legislature, I am proud to say that the Ministry of the

Environment is one of the chief sponsors of the Clean Air

Commute Week with the Pollution Probe organization.

I also earlier this week unveiled the first mobile air

monitoring bus that this province has ever had, at a cost of

measuring our air quality in this province, something that

previous governments never thought about.

The difference between our government and their

government is that they considered a Drive Clean program

and rejected it. Our government is doing things. Your

government talked, talked, talked.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My next

question is for the Minister of Energy. We've argued for

the past few days that the chair of Hydro, the Premier's

good golfing buddy, Bill Farlinger, is in a conflict of

interest. We say that Mr Farlinger can't sit as the chair of

Hydro and, at the same time, sit on the board of directors

of Newcourt, a company which finances the building of

electrical power plants that are going to compete with

Hydro.

Just this week, the employees of Hydro received this

very glossy publication, much like your propaganda that

you put out. It says: "Ontario Hydro's Code of Business

Conduct." It says on page 12: "Certain outside business

interests may serve as a conflict of interest. We do not

serve as directors or officers of any organization that

interests may serve as a conflict of interest. We do not

serve as directors or officers of any organization that

interests may serve as a conflict of interest. We do not

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question's to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It has to do with the legislation introduced today on the Greater Toronto Services Board and to get an explanation from you on what seems to be a rather bizarre turn of events that has happened with the introduction of this bill. I refer now to the voting.

The major financial decision the board will make will be on GO Transit. The city of Toronto, of course, has been quite interested because you've allocated 50% of the costs of GO Transit to them; that's over \$50 million a year. That will be one of the key decisions the city of Toronto wants to be involved in. But in order to change your decision, the Greater Toronto Services Board now doesn't need a majority vote; it needs a two-thirds vote. It's very strange. They need a two-thirds vote of the board in order to overturn your allocation of 50% of the cost of GO. Can you possibly give us any explanation of the logic of a two-thirds vote required on a key financial decision for the city of Toronto?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I think everybody will agree that the Greater Toronto Services Board is a great addition to making sure that the city of Toronto and its surrounding regions work very well. What we've done is that Alan Tonks went out to all of the communities —

Mr Phillips: He didn't recommend this.

Hon Mr Leach: He did recommend that, Gerry; that's exactly what he recommended. Mr Tonks went out to all of the stakeholders involved, all of the municipalities, including the city of Toronto, and said, "There's a difficulty with representation on the board." Mr Tonks came back with a recommendation, which we've accepted, that gives every municipality in the greater Toronto area a place on the board. It makes sure that the votes are weighted to ensure that the city of Toronto at all times, has at least 50% of the votes.

What we have here is a bill that addresses the concerns that were brought forward. The legislation, as introduced today, will be out for further consultation over the summer. If there are adjustments that any of the stakeholders want to make, we will certainly —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you, Supplementary.

Mr Phillips: You've sandbagged Mr Tonks. Yes, the city of Toronto has 50% of the vote, but they need two-thirds of the votes in order to carry the day, in order to change your allocation of cost. You have said, "City of Toronto, you're paying 50% of the cost of GO; you're going to pay the \$50 million." In order to make any change, they need two-thirds of the vote. It's not going to happen. You have handcuffed this board that you're creating.

I return to the question. You have gone against the recommendations of Al Tonks, you've gone against the recommendations of Milt Farrow, of all of these people

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): As the member knows, the Health Services Restructuring Commission has examined this community in Northumberland and other communities as well, and any of the recommendations that are made by the commission are final to the Ministry of Health to implement the recommendation. However, it is now up

If I ask you to reverse this decision of the commission, you're just going to pull out your script and say you're not responsible, but I challenge you today to claim that the quality of health care delivered in Northumberland county is not your responsibility and that you cannot act to protect standards.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): As the member knows, the Health Services Restructuring Commission has examined this community in Northumberland and other communities as well, and any of the recommendations that are made by the commission are final to the Ministry of Health to implement the recommendation. However, it is now up

A single ward at Cobourg cares for a combination of medical-surgical, perinatal and obstetrics patients, and the report warns, "In general, newborn babies should not be exposed to sick elderly patients, and certainly not to infectious children, and operating rooms should not be located near infectious children."

Mrs Martin Boyd (London Centre): My question is to the Ministry of Health. Last Friday the hospital restructuring commission shocked the people of Northumberland county by ordering the closure of the modern, up-to-date Port Hope hospital, built in the 1960s by donations from the community, and the retention of the old, inconvenient and inefficient Cobourg site. People are deeply concerned that this decision compromises the quality of health care in Northumberland. The commission made this decision despite a Northumberland Health Care Corp report clearly outlining their site-specific clinical concerns.

Hospital Restructuring

ations. Whatever changes do take place we will certainly ensure that health standards are maintained and quality health care is delivered to the people in that community. The local member has talked to me about that particular community, and we will ensure that high-quality health care will be provided to citizens there.

Mrs Boyd: Minister, you're well aware that it is your responsibility and yours alone to ensure that every citizen resident in this province has access to quality care and that those standards are maintained. The bill that I introduced yesterday would have required you to take standards of care into consideration. That's not what the commission does; it just looks at the bottom line.

The commission has directed the Northumbria Health Care Corp to save an additional \$1.7 million and given them a pality \$400,000 for rehab. Dr Mark Azzopardi, until last Friday the chief of medical staff at NMHC, resigned, citing the commission's decision. He said, "That will enforce the level of mediocrity in our services that I cannot accept. It goes against my principles as a physician."

Minister, will you fulfil your responsibility as minister to protect health care standards by reversing the

Hon Mrs Wilmer: Our Ministry of Health and our

government have always indicated that we do everything possible to maintain standards within this province. In fact, the document that was brought forward by the member's party yesterday regarding the Patients' Bill of Rights was a very sweeping document. Unfortunately, what it did not take into consideration was the fact that there was absolutely no framework as to how this would be funded and there was absolutely no framework as to how it could be enforced.

on a Patients' Bill of Rights, we're working on a patients' safety act. We'll certainly take into consideration the information that you have provided. We want to make sure, however, that our bill of rights does ensure there is a framework for enforcement and for funding.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York): My question is to the Ministry of Health. Hospitals in my riding of Durham-York continue to face significant growth pressures of at least twice the provincial average. I have had a number of meetings with constituents in my riding where they have raised their concerns about funding our hospitals and I

Historic underfunding of hospitals in the GTA 905 region has created a situation where our residents need to play catch-up just to be in the same playing field as residents in the rest of the province. Minister, I understand that you made an announcement yesterday regarding funding for hospitals in the GTA 905 area. Could you please explain how this government has recognized the needs of residents in the GTA and how this government will ensure that quality health care in the GTA is not compromised?

has been addressed?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Yesterday, when we made our announcement of \$206.7 million for capital, we also responded to the need for growth funding and we have increased the growth funding again for this community and we added yesterday as well \$17 million. That allocation, the individual allocation for each hospital, will be known to the hospitals in a few weeks.

**RURAL AND NORTHERN
HEALTH SERVICES**

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): My question is also for the Minister of Health. It's almost a year ago today that your predecessor Mr Willson, on the laws of the Alexandra Marine and General Hospital in Goderich, outlined your government's rural and northern hospital framework. We haven't heard much in the intervening 364

days.

I'd like you to stand here today and tell the people of communities like Barry's Bay and Almonte, Petrolia and Walkerton, Grimsby and Alexandria when you are going to announce the specifics of your rural and northern small hospitals framework and what those specifics will mean to quality care in rural and northern communities.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): The framework has been under development, and I'm very pleased to say we are at a point where we are very, very close now to making all the information public. Of course, this will preserve the hospitals in the rural and the northern parts of this province.

Mr Conway: I thank the minister for that promise. But the promise is not going to solve the problems that hospitals like St Francis Memorial are having in Barry's Bay, to name but one. In the intervening months budgets have been cut further, programs are under more stress

public concern in rural and northern communities

Minister, we need specifics. When do you specifically intend to tell those scores of small hospital communities in rural and northern Ontario what the program is specifically going to mean? And let me ask this other question. Will you as minister be making the decision about the specific configurations in these rural and northern hospital communities or will those decisions be left to your all-powerful hospital restructuring commission or some other body?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As the member knows, the framework has been developed in conjunction with the Ontario Hospital Association and also there has been a small role played by the Health Services Restructuring Commission, but in large part it has been the local community through the district health council that has made many of the decisions. As I say, we hope to have all that information available to people in this community in very short order. I think what we're going to see is the continuance of high-quality health care to people in this province; we're going to see 24-hour care provided, and certainly services will be enhanced for people in this province.

1520

HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I have a question for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. The minister will know that there is about a 20% unemployment rate in Sault Ste Marie and Algoma district. He will also know that the previous government negotiated a land claim with the Garden River First Nation which allowed for the construction of a four-lane highway link east of Sault Ste Marie across that reserve. That would be an approximately \$50-million project and would create a great deal of employment and improve the infrastructure. Can the minister explain why he has held this project up for over two years and when the announcement will be made that this project will proceed?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): The member of the third party knows full well that I've been instrumental in making this agreement so it was an agreement between the government of Ontario and the Garden River First Nation. The MTO is the lead ministry on this on the highway construction. This road has been envisioned in the Sault Ste Marie area since John Rhodes was the cabinet minister.

Mr Wildman: We got the agreement.

Hon Mr Hodgson: And the agreement wasn't signed. I was at the signing ceremony shortly after. You were invited and Tony Martin attended. Since that I've been in Garden River twice. The MTO is having some difficulties negotiating the specifics around some of the terms of the contract. I know that they are proceeding ahead. The money has been budgeted to complete this project and I'm hopeful that the two parties will come to an amicable agreement and begin work.

TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): My question is directed to the Minister of Education and Training. It pertains to some disturbing information that has come to my attention through phone calls from many grandparents but I'd say at least 100 parents in the last week. That concerns the so-called newsletter put out by the Toronto District School Board called Parent Link. This particular so-called newsletter has a lot of inaccuracies in it, much misleading and so mischievous information, and even what I'd term some propaganda. Minister, you have read this so-called newsletter. I'd like to know to what extent you believe this particular so-called newsletter is so poisonous, so inappropriate, so misleading and so mischievous, both in its intent and its tone.

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): I thank the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale because his concerns, unfortunately, are very accurate. I have a copy of the newsletter, which purports to be a communication from parents to parents, but on further

Hon Mr Hodgson: We are trying to help the whole getting rid of this high unemployment rate in our region? Algoma area and more jobs so that we can help to start agreement and get the project online so that there will be improvements to infrastructure in the Sault Ste Marie situation there. All of our government policies have been directed to make it so it's possible for people to get jobs in this province and as well in Sault Ste Marie.

I want to talk specifically about this contract. We are trying our best to make sure this becomes a reality. I have met twice with the first nation. It takes two sides to agree on the terms of the agreement. If it was totally up to me, I would have loved to see it happen a year ago. It's unfortunate that it has dragged on for a year. I'm hopeful that both sides will come to the table and get on with this project. Not only does it create jobs but it makes it safer for the residents of that area. That's been a dangerous section of highway for almost a generation now. I find that totally unacceptable.

We are trying to come to an agreement. I look forward to working with you as well as your other colleague from Sault Ste Marie to make that happen.

Mr Wildman: The minister should know that the

former Minister of Indian Affairs, Ron Irwin, and I and my colleague the then Minister of Northern Development participated with the chief and council in a signing ceremony prior to the last election. It was after the election that this government decided to put a hold on all highway construction projects and decided to lengthen the time of this project from five to seven years to 13, which led to the problems.

Will the minister commit that he will complete the final

"Whereas Linhaven and other homes for the aged have among the residents more individuals afflicted with Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and other medical conditions which require an appropriate complement of staff and necessary equipment to meet their medical needs; "Be it resolved that the government of Ontario increase funding to Linhaven Home for the Aged in St Catharines so that the medical requirements of Linhaven residents may be properly addressed and seniors may live in dignity in our community;"

I affix my signature to this petition, as I am in full agreement with its content.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I have a petition that is signed by over 44,000 people from the Brantford area that I've been asked to present. It's to the Legislative Assembly:

"Whereas on Thursday November 27, 1997, the Health Services Restructuring Commission proposed the recommendation that St Joseph's Hospital Brantford be closed by April 2000;

"We are asking for the support of all of you who agree that the government should not waste \$20 million to duplicate the existing facility of St Joseph's Hospital to another site.

"Therefore I am signing this petition as a taxpayer and a concerned member of this community to show that I disagree with the recommendation to close St Joseph's Hospital."

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): "Whereas the federal government of Canada has passed Bill C-68, An Act respecting firearms and other weapons; and

"Whereas we welcome real gun control and support those portions of Bill C-68 which provide tougher penalties for the criminal use of firearms, new offences related to firearms smuggling and trafficking; and

"Whereas the registration provisions of Bill C-68 will misallocate limited resources available to law enforcement agencies, with no practical effect on the traffic of illegal firearms or the use of guns by violent criminals; and

"Whereas the gun registration provisions of Bill C-68 will cost taxpayers enormous sums of money while creating another level of taxation for law abiding hunters and sports enthusiasts;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to repeal from Bill C-68 those provisions for a compulsory registration of all firearms."

I proudly affix my signature.

RENT REGULATION

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): To Premier Michael Harris, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Al Leach and members of the Ontario provincial Legislature:

"We, the undersigned, protest the government actions against tenants described below:

"The Rent Control Act protects Ontario's 3.3 million tenants. Rent control allows for security and stability in their homes and communities. Uncontrolled rent increases leave tenants, their families and Ontario communities open to eviction, personal distress and contribute directly to social instability. We want this government to stop any actions that would allow uncontrolled rents.

"Further, this government is considering changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act favourable to landlords for easier and faster evictions. This is unacceptable to Ontario tenants and damaging to Ontario communities.

"This government also plans to get rid of public housing, has halted the creation of basement apartments and the new supply of affordable non-profit housing. These types of housing are necessary for low- and moderate-income tenants to obtain accommodation they can afford. The government must cease all actions that reduce the affordability and availability of these kinds of housing.

"This government has eliminated funding for United Tenants of Ontario, the five municipal tenant federations and other important tenant services at a time when they are attacking all tenants' rights. Funding for these groups must be reinstated so that Ontario's tenants, and not just their landlords, are able to bring their views to bear in government deliberations on tenants' rights and protections. A consultation process with tenant organizations should be initiated immediately to develop a plan for sustainable funding for services to tenants."

I affix my signature to this petition.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I have a petition signed by over 1,000 of my constituents and it says:

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences, and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

I present this to the House today on their behalf.

CHIROPRACTIC HEALTH CARE

Mrs Barbara Fisher (Bruce): "To the Ontario Legislature, to Premier Mike Harris, Minister Elizabeth Wilmer and the members of the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has recently strengthened its reputation as the Ministry of Medicine through its \$1.7-billion three-year agreement with the Ontario Medical Association; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is restricting access to alternative cost-saving treatments for patients of the province; and

"Whereas two recent reports commissioned by the Ministry of Health called for increased OHP funding to improve patient access to chiropractic services on the grounds of safety, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness; and

"Whereas over one million Ontario adults now use chiropractic services annually, increasingly those with higher incomes, because of the cost barrier caused by government underfunding; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has shown blatant disregard for the needs of the citizens of Ontario in restricting funding for chiropractic services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize the contribution made by chiropractors to the good health of the people of Ontario, to recognize the taxpayer dollars saved by the use of low-cost preventive care such as that provided by chiropractors and to recognize that to restrict funding for chiropractic health care only serves to limit access to a needed health care service."

I affix my name to this petition.

RENT REGULATION

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I have a petition addressed to the Legislature and it reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, protest this government's actions against tenants described below:

"The Rent Control Act protects Ontario's 3.3 million tenants. Rent control allows for security and stability in their homes and communities. Uncontrolled rent increases leave tenants, their families and Ontario communities open to eviction, personal distress and contribute directly to social instability. We want this government to stop any actions that would allow uncontrolled rents.

"Further, this government is considering changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act favourable to landlords for easier and faster evictions. This is unacceptable to Ontario tenants and damaging to Ontario communities.

"This government also plans to get rid of public housing, has halted the creation of basement apartments and the new supply of affordable non-profit housing. These types of housing are necessary for low- and moderate-income tenants to obtain accommodation they can afford. The government must cease all actions that reduce the affordability and availability of these kinds of housing.

"This government has eliminated funding for United Tenants of Ontario, the five municipal tenant federations and other important tenant services at a time when they must be reinstated so that Ontario's tenants, and not just their landlords, are able to bring their views to bear in government deliberations on tenants' rights and protections. A consultation process with tenant organizations should be initiated immediately to develop a plan for sustainable funding for services to tenants."

I'm affixing my signature to this document.

1540

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition signed by workers in Hamilton, Kingston and Sauli Ste Marie. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas each year in Ontario approximately 300 workers are killed on the job, several thousand die of occupational diseases and 400,000 suffer work-related injuries and illnesses; and

"Whereas during the past decade the Workers' Health and Safety Centre proved to be the most cost-effective WCB-funded prevention organization dedicated to worker health and safety concerns; and

"Whereas the WCB provides over 80% of its legislated prevention funding to several employer-controlled safety associations and less than 20% to the Workers' Health and Safety Centre; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre recently lost several million dollars in funding and course revenues" — and it has been confirmed by correspondence from the ministry that that money has gone — "due to government changes to legislated training requirements; and

"Whereas 30% of Workers' Health and Safety Centre staff were laid off due to these lost training funds; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre now faces an additional 25% cut to its 1998 budget, which will be used to augment new funding for employer safety associations in the health, education and service sectors; and

"Whereas the WCB's 1998 planned baseline budget cuts for safety associations and Workers' Health and Safety Centre will be disproportionately against the workers' centre and reduce its 1998 budget allocation to less than 15% of the WCB prevention funding;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the WCB's proposed cuts and direct the WCB to increase the Workers' Health and Safety Centre's funding to at least 50% of the WCB's legislated prevention funding; and

"Further, we, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the WCB to significantly increase its legislated prevention funding in order to eliminate workplace illnesses, injury and death."

On behalf of my NDP colleagues, I continue to support these petitions.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): I'm pleased to read the first of what will be many more petitions I expect to present in the fall of this session. It reads:

"Whereas the municipalities of Hamilton-Wentworth in the last three years, which were aimed at finding a solution to the question of municipal restructuring; and

"Whereas the regional chairman has been elected in the last two elections with major pluralities based on a platform of one-tier government; and

"Whereas the taxpayers of Hamilton-Wentworth will incur unnecessary costs due to local government's inability to find a solution to the question of municipal restructuring in Hamilton-Wentworth;

"We, the undersigned, petition the government to allow the municipalities of Hamilton-Wentworth until October 31, 1998, to resolve the question of municipal restructuring in Hamilton-Wentworth; and if at that time no solution has been reached by consensus, that the Ontario government appoint a commissioner, who will have binding authority, to come forward with a solution to restructure Hamilton-Wentworth; thereby ending any more waste of taxpayers' money."

I affix my signature as I'm in full agreement.

RENT REGULATION

Ms Annamarte Castelli (Downsview): I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has brought forth Bill 96, legislation which will effectively kill rent control in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris campaign literature during the York South by-election stated that rent control will continue; and

"Whereas tenant groups, students and seniors have pointed out that this legislation will hurt those that can least afford it, as it will cause higher rents across markets in Ontario; and

"Whereas this Mike Harris proposal will make it easier for residents to be evicted from retirement care homes;

"Whereas the Liberal caucus continues to believe that all tenants, and particularly the vulnerable in our society who live on fixed incomes, deserve the assurance of a maximum rent cap;

"We, the undersigned, demand that the Mike Harris government scrap its proposal to abandon and eliminate rent control and introduce legislation which will protect tenants in the province of Ontario."

I have affixed my signature to this petition.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition forwarded to me by Professor Roy Adams, the Hamilton-Wentworth Coalition for Social Justice, Ontario Education Alliance and the United Senior Citizens of Ontario, Zone 14. It reads as follows:

"Whereas freedom of association is one of our most well-established international human rights standards; and

"Whereas it is included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the covenants of the United Nations, the constitution of the International Labour Organization and has recently been reaffirmed by such politically disparate

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CHILD CARE SUPPLEMENT INFORMATION COLLECTION ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 SUR LA COLLECTE DES RENSEIGNEMENTS NÉCESSAIRES À L'OCTROI DU SUPPLÉMENT DE REVENU POUR LES FRAIS DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Mr Bud Wildman (Albama): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I think I have unanimous agreement to request unanimous consent for the withdrawal of my private member's Bill 29, An Act to increase teacher representation at the Ontario College of Teachers, from the order paper.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Is there unanimous consent to withdraw that bill from the order paper? It is agreed.

WITHDRAWAL OF BILL 29

Mr Bud Wildman (Albama): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I think I have unanimous agreement to request unanimous consent for the withdrawal of my private member's Bill 29, An Act to increase teacher representation at the Ontario College of Teachers, from the order paper.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Is there unanimous consent to withdraw that bill from the order paper? It is agreed.

"Whereas it is also contrary to Canada's obligations as a member of the UN and the ILO and it almost certainly offends Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

"Therefore, we urge you to withdraw Bill 22, this most offensive act, immediately."

I proudly add my name to the petitioners mentioned.

"Whereas the standard establishes, in the words of the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that 'Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his or her interests'; and

"Whereas your prevention of unionism act, Bill 22, which expressly forbids workplace participants to join a trade union, violates this international human rights norm, placing your government in the company of a very few others worldwide who openly stand against this cornerstone of democracy; and

"Whereas it is also contrary to Canada's obligations as a member of the UN and the ILO and it almost certainly offends Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 28, An Act to permit the Collection of Personal Information for the Payment of the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families / Projet de loi 28, Loi permettant la collecte de renseignements personnels en vue du versement du supplément de revenu de l'Ontario pour les familles travailleuses ayant des frais de garde d'enfants.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepaan): I'll indicate at the outset that I'll only be speaking for a short while on Bill 28, the Child Care Supplement Information Collection Act.

I would like to discuss two things, maybe to give some background on the national child benefits and then some of the rationale behind the government's proceeding with Bill 28.

One of the goals of our government is to ensure the best outcomes for children in Ontario, those on welfare and indeed those working low-income families, and I am encouraged that the federal government has recognized the need to act on this important issue.

The national child benefit is the missing piece in the policy development process that will help combat child poverty, not just here in Ontario but across the country. I know that's something we all hold to be a key public policy priority.

In July 1998, the national child benefit will come into effect. The NCB is a new initiative designed by federal, provincial and territorial governments for low-income families with children. It will help reduce child poverty and help families to stay in the workforce, in the labour market. This is an important issue for me. I know I asked a question more a year ago of the Minister of Community and Social Services on this issue, so it's something that I believe is very important and that I know constituents in Nepaan believe is important as well.

We as a government are very committed to addressing child poverty and assisting children at risk. The member for Wellington was a very key advocate with respect to the Healthy Babies program and deserves a significant amount of credit for ensuring that was contained in the budget. He advocated that as part of the pre-budget consultations through the standing committee on finance, and we congratulate him for that effort.

We are committed to addressing child poverty and assisting children at risk, as I said, and we will be re-investing money in programs and benefits that help low-income families. Municipalities will be partners in Ontario's reinvestment programs and benefits that help families by tailoring programs to help meet local needs.

We are surpassing our reinvestment commitment by creating new benefits such as the Ontario child care supplement for working families that will provide support for up to 350,000 children. We are also expanding existing programs such as Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, which I mentioned just a short moment ago.

Coming out of the most recent federal-provincial meeting, we agreed that we will release an annual accountability report to account for our reinvestment and also to measure how successful the NCB initiative is at addressing child poverty.

1550

The goals of the national child benefit are to help prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty, promote attachment to the workforce and reduce overlap and duplication between provincial and federal programs. There are two parts to the national child benefit: (a) the creation of the Canada child tax benefit, which combines

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): I appreciate a relatively early opportunity to enter the debate. The member's somewhat different tone from his introductory

With those remarks on the national child benefit and a brief summary of Bill 28, I yield the floor to my colleagues in the official opposition and the third party.

being introduced at first reading.

and presentation of Bill 28 to this Legislature prior to it Information and Privacy Commissioner in the preparation certainly did take the opportunity to consult with the collected in a whole host of ways. The government collected individuals from whom personal information is directly collected is not enacted. This requirement is to inform collected information if the supplement for which it was collected information in the fall, but recommended that the information collected be destroyed if the supplement was not enacted this year, and that in any case the authority for authorizing payment of the supplement is passed.

Since it is not known when the legislation will be passed, the IPC accepted the provision repealing the new act on April 1, 1999, and the requirement to destroy collected information if the supplement for which it was collected information in the fall, but recommended that the information collected be destroyed if the supplement was not enacted this year, and that in any case the authority for collecting the information be repealed when legislation authorizing payment of the supplement is passed.

The bill should deal only with the collection of personal information for the purposes of the supplement. The IPC recognized that special legislative authority would be necessary to obtain the information in time to verify entitlement shortly after the actual enactment of the supplement in the fall, but recommended that the information collected be destroyed if the supplement was not enacted this year, and that in any case the authority for collecting the information be repealed when legislation authorizing payment of the supplement is passed.

It's extremely important to note at the conclusion of my remarks that the Information and Privacy Commissioner has been consulted in the drafting of this bill. The bill reflects the commissioner's advice on these issues. The commissioner was consulted and his recommendations were very much reflected in this bill.

Bill 28 provides that the information collected under this act is to be destroyed if legislation establishing the supplement has not been enacted by March 31, 1999. It also repeals the authority to collect this information on April 1, 1999.

With respect to Bill 28, the 1998 budget proposed a new Ontario child care supplement for working families that would be delivered monthly to 210,000 families for 350,000 children under the age of seven. The budget proposed that the payment of the supplement would start later this year, in the latter part of 1998. To ensure that payments begin in 1998, personal information to determine entitlement to this supplement must be collected by early fall. Bill 28, if enacted, would authorize the collection of this information.

With respect to Bill 28, the 1998 budget proposed a new Ontario child care supplement for working families that would be delivered monthly to 210,000 families for 350,000 children under the age of seven. The budget proposed that the payment of the supplement would start later this year, in the latter part of 1998. To ensure that payments begin in 1998, personal information to determine entitlement to this supplement must be collected by early fall. Bill 28, if enacted, would authorize the collection of this information.

the child tax benefit with the new national supplement, and (b) an Ontario strategy to invest dollars to benefit low-income families with children.

expenses. There are a number of pieces of information which people are required to present in order to determine eligibility, but it doesn't actually say that they have to have a receipt for their child care expenses. I trust that's an omission in the drafting of the legislation that is going to be addressed in regulations, because surely if this is indeed to be a child care supplement to relieve some of the costs of child care for working and low-income families, they will require some receipt to demonstrate that those dollars are indeed going to pay for child care costs.

I do have some further confusion. My confusion is about the child care supplement itself, because this legislation is enabling legislation to put the child care supplement in place. I have a confusion first of all that arises from the statement that was made in the 1998 Ontario budget speech in which the Minister of Finance announced that we were going to have this new supplement. I note that he says there will be \$140 million to be spent on a new child care supplement for working families. He goes on to say: "In the 1997 budget, I announced a \$40 million child care tax credit. Ontario intends to combine that money with an additional \$100 million in 1998-99 to create a new program that supports 350,000 young children in working families."

We're not going to quarrel with the establishment of a child care benefit, a supplement, to support working families, but I find it very interesting that in this budget speech that additional \$100 million could almost pass as being a financial commitment being made to young children by the Mike Harris government. I think it's important to point out of course that the \$100 million which is being put into the budget, or at least into the new child care supplement, is \$100 million that's coming from the federal government to support child care programs. It doesn't mention that anywhere in this particular budget speech statement.

It reminds me of another part in this budget speech in which the government established a new — again, they use the word "new" — millennium scholarship fund, building on the federal government's millennium scholarship fund which had just been announced and which was very well received by post-secondary students across the country. Ontario and the Mike Harris government indeed wanted to get on the bandwagon of the new millennium scholarship fund that the federal government had introduced so they decided they would roll their existing funds into the new millennium scholarship fund and call it a new fund although there was no new Ontario money in that fund.

1600

We have exactly the same situation again with the child care supplement for working families. It is a new program, according to the budget speech, with an additional \$100 million. I think it's important to note that there is no new Ontario government money in this program, at least not at this point in this budget, and the only new money in the program, which allows a new program to be created, is coming from the federal government.

The other question I have is exactly how much money is going to be committed. We have the budget speech

comments on Tuesday evening of this week would suggest that as we approach the dying hours of the legislative session, they have been urged not to bait the bears in the opposition and get us going, so that we will indeed be cooperative in having only one speaker and somewhat limiting our time in commenting on the legislation that remains to be dealt with today.

I was more than ready to challenge the member opposite on some of the rather provocative comments that were being made at a quarter to midnight on Tuesday evening, but in the heat of the assembly, in the dying hours, I will refrain from going back and revisiting some of those comments and will proceed simply to comment on the bill which is in front of us.

This bill is a rather small bill, and the fact that it is coming to us in the last hours of the legislative session suggests that the government may not consider it to be a terribly significant piece of legislation, that they would expect the opposition would agree to limit its debate and move through fairly quickly to approve what is basically enabling legislation to ensure that the Ontario child care supplement for working families can be put into place. Nevertheless I have a number of questions and a number of concerns that arise from this seemingly rather small, simply enabling piece of legislation.

It's quite obvious that if you are going to bring in a child care supplement for working families, you're going to have to have the access that is necessary to determine eligibility for that supplement.

I am pleased to note that this government may be prepared to be a little bit more careful in establishing eligibility for the child care supplement for working families than they were when they brought in the rebate for child care of \$40 a day last November in response to the fact that students were out of school because of the teachers' protest over Bill 160. You will recall that that particular rebate, which was supposedly for child care, did not require any kind of verification that child care expenses had actually been incurred. There were no receipts required whatsoever. So it simply became a \$40-a-day rebate to people who had children under a certain age whether they had incurred any out-of-pocket expenses or not. Therefore, there was no need to have any kind of validation.

We objected rather strongly to that approach, because we believed what this government was really doing was simply trying in a rather blatant way to buy the silence of parents on this particular issue, which was causing great political concern for the government at that moment in time. It clearly did not succeed in buying parents' support because parents continue to be extremely concerned about what this government is doing to the education of their children.

Nevertheless, I think it is important to note that if the government is serious about a child care benefit, they are going to bring in legislation which will allow eligibility for that benefit to be determined. At least I think that's what this bill does. I've read it fairly carefully, and I don't actually see that they are requiring receipts for child care

saying that there's \$140 million — \$40 million of the provincial government's money and \$100 million from the federal fund. That should be \$140 million. The federal minister, in announcing this program just last week, has been given the information that Ontario estimates that \$117 million will be available in 1998-99 for investment as a result of this new program, the national child benefit, the federal program.

That gives me just a little bit of concern. I don't want to be too sceptical in this place on the last day, we think, of the Legislative sitting, but it does trouble me a little bit that this program is so late coming into place that there will not be cheques for individuals receiving this supplement until later in the year, and I quote the government's background paper. I just hope the full \$140 million is indeed going to flow to people who are eligible for the supplement in the course of the 1998-99 year and that this is not going to be in any way reduced to perhaps the \$117 million which Mr Pettigrew has given to believe Ontario would be spending in this current year. I trust we will see the full \$140 million expended, even though this enabling legislation is coming before the Legislature in the very last days of our June session.

Minister Pettigrew also indicates that he's been given information that the reinvestment pool on this new benefit will grow to \$156 million on an annualized basis. The budget speech indication from the Minister of Finance is that next year the Hart's government plans to invest more than \$200 million in this program. Again, that creates a confusion. The federal minister has been told that the fund will be \$156 million on an annualized basis. Mr Eves, the finance minister, said it will be \$200 million next year. I trust again, and I don't want to be too cynical, that in next year's budget we will see a commitment of \$200 million flowing to people in that fiscal year, and that the \$200 million will be a minimum annualized commitment to this supplement.

Mrs Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Don't hold your breath.

Mrs McLeod: The member for Beaches-Woodbine says, "Don't hold your breath." I think we all believe there is reason to be sceptical about this government's commitment to child care. That's why I hasten to point out the somewhat reduced figures which Mr Pettigrew, the federal minister, has been given by the Ontario government, reduced in terms of the comparison to what was in the budget speech.

I want to take it on faith and I want publicly to challenge the government to make sure that in this fiscal year, 1998-99, \$140 million flows to working families under this supplement and that in next year's budget, and in next year's fiscal year, indeed at least \$200 million will flow as a child care supplement to working families. We will go back and check that record and determine whether or not Mr Eves has made good on his government's commitment.

My next area of concern is the question of when this money is going to reach people. The federal program is in effect as of July 1. Next week, next Wednesday, the

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): Yes, but we want to come back next week.

Mrs McLeod: We're here next week so I don't mind if this debate is to continue to next Monday or next Tuesday. I'm most happy to be here. I feel we might be able to give due and proper justice to some of these pieces of legislation if the House comes back next week. But I'm a little bit surprised, given the slowness of the response of the government members, that they are so anxious to be back next week. It looks to me as though they're rather anxious to be out of this place as quickly as possible.

In any event, I return to my concern about when the money is going to reach people. The government is taking its time not only in returning to the House this afternoon to keep a quorum, but they are certainly going to take their time in terms of getting the child care supplement into the hands of the working families they profess to be concerned about in their budget speech. The minister made his budget speech some time ago, May 5, 1998, yet here we are, on supposedly the last day of the legislative sitting, and we are only now dealing with the legislation which enables the commitments made in this budget to proceed. The federal moneys are available to this government to use to the benefit of working families for child care expenses as of July 1. The costs of child care to families don't end when the House rises. They don't stop on July 1. Families continue to incur child care costs over the course of the summer; they'll continue to incur child care costs over September and October and November. The government is late bringing in this legislation. Families therefore cannot even apply for the supplement until September 1, 1998, a full two months after the moneys were available to the provincial government to be used to

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Fort William.

Mrs McLeod: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The government members are really testing the opposition's willingness to cooperate. They move very slowly today. They should realize that if at any point they can't get a quorum back in the House, they will lose the balance of their legislative agenda because the House will adjourn and we have no motion in front of us that calls us back next week. We were under the understanding that the government House leader was rather anxious to get these remaining pieces of legislation passed today and if the government —

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): Yes, but we want to come back next week.

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provide supplements to working families, and it is anybody's guess when this government is going to process the applications and actually get money into the hands of

The government's background statement says that working families.

families can expect, once their eligibility is determined, "to receive cheques later in the year." That's like saying, "Your cheque will be in the mail," I guess we'll have to

make the government on faith, because that's what the government says. It is absolutely inexcusable that this government makes a commitment to working families, save how concerned they are to make sure that the

says how concerned they are to make sure that the working families, those families in need, get some relief for their child care expenses, says that on May 5 and here we are on June 25 considering enabling legislation that

allows it to get off the ground, to at least start the process of gathering the information which the government says it needs to get this supplement into the hands of working

families, and that this government makes no commitment to working families in terms of actually putting the dollars into their pockets until some time later in the year.

If this government was serious about providing relief and serious about acting on the commitments which they are so quick to highlight, to put in bold print in the budget

speeches, they could have brought this enabling legislation forward much sooner. It is not an extensive bill. It is only three and a half pages long. It didn't take a lot of drafting.

it's not going to take a lot of debate, I suspect. Why could this not have come forward sooner so this program could have been in place for families to apply as of July 1, when the federal program becomes effective?

There's a further confusion. There's a lot of confusion when it comes to this seemingly simple bill.

They do call it a new program, a new Ontario child supplement program for working families, but some form of program, according to the government's own budget

speech, was announced in the 1997 budget. In the 1997 budget, the minister says, "I announced a \$40-million child tax credit." We know that this \$40 million that the

government is putting into this new child care supplement for working families is exactly the same money that was in the 1997 child care tax credit.

WE know that this government has made previous announcements of \$40 million for child care support. We know that the first time the Mike Harris government announced that they were going to commit \$40 million to

support for child care programs in this province, none of that money flowed. The Minister of Finance acknowledged that in reviewing estimates last year of the gov-

ernment's previous year's spending on child care. They hadn't spent that \$40 million.

and said it would now be a child care tax credit. I guess we have to assume that the \$40 million did indeed flow to people through a tax credit when they indicated their

whether the \$40 million was spent; we don't know how much of it or how little of it was actually claimed and was

therefore spent by the government, but we have to assume that the money did flow last year. What we do know is that it is exactly the same \$40 million that was to have been spent last year and the year before; the same \$40 million is the \$40 million that's going into this new child care supplement this year.

I think what leads to my confusion. There may be an answer, and if we didn't have such limited time for debate in the dying hours of the legislative session, I would hope to get an answer from the government. I don't know.

to get an answer from the government to clear up my confusion, because I'm sure there must be an answer to this. I don't understand why, since there was a child care tax credit in 1997 that presumably flowed that presump-

ably the government paid out, we now need enabling legislation to gather the same kind of information which I assume was required in 1997 to pay the child care tax

I don't see any information that's required in this legislation which would not be obtainable from the tax credit.

return. I know that the eligibility for the child tax supplement is going to be based on the 1997 tax returns. I know in future years the information that is going to be used to determine eligibility for the supplement will be the 1998 tax returns.

based on the previous year's tax return. I'm not sure why we need enabling legislation to collect this information now when we didn't seem to need that enabling legislation

for the 1997 child care tax credit that, as I say, I believe from which we didn't seem to need that enormous registration was in place, and I believe money flowed. Again, I wouldn't want to be cynical. I wouldn't want

to assume that for a second year in a row no money flowed of that \$40 million to families because the government hadn't done its homework, hadn't put in place necessary

legislation to collect the information to allow the \$40 million to go to working families who claimed it through their tax forms.

Since I don't want to assume the money didn't flow last year, I don't want to assume the government didn't do its homework, it leaves me with the question, why then do we need new spending legislation to collect the same

information that I would think needed to be collected for the 1997 child care tax credit? If there was a little more time, I think we could delay the passage of this legislation

Nevertheless, the reason I have that basic concern is that the fact that we need this enabling legislation, that

this new information needs to be gathered — whatever new information has to be gathered — means that this program can't now be in place for July 1 and the dollars

are not actually going to flow to families until some time later in the year.

transposition. I had I mind on page 4 of the bill. It's a very brief bill, but it has a clause on page 4 that I want to draw to the attention of the Legislature. Again, if there was time, we could place this as a question and hopefully get some

answers from the government. The clause on page 4 of the bill says, "If the legislation establishing the Ontario child care supplement for working families has not received

royal assent by March 31, 1999, the personal information

collected under this act shall be destroyed as soon as

practicable." I am truly puzzled by the inclusion of that clause in this seemingly innocent act that's here to gather information. I guess the questions that occur to me are: Why is the government collecting information for something that they have not yet brought into place? What would stop the government from ensuring that royal assent is indeed given to the child care supplement for working families? Why isn't that legislation here? Why hasn't it been passed? Why doesn't it have royal assent?

They have said — this is supposed to be an assurance to people who are providing personal information — they are going to ensure that personal information that's collected under this enabling act will be destroyed as soon as is practicable. But why are they collecting information before the other act, the act that this enables to be put in place, receives royal assent? And why in their own enabling legislation are they now questioning whether their legislation to establish the child care supplement is actually going to be put in place and have royal assent?

This government has a majority. If this government is committed to bringing in a child care supplement for working families, it has the power to do it and to do it much more quickly than they're doing it. I can't think of any reason why this act establishing the child care supplement for working families would not have royal assent by the end of March 1999, given this government's majority and given their supposed commitment to the program.

Are they going to collect the information in order to find out how much money they are prepared to actually give to people to make sure it doesn't exceed the \$40 million which they are prepared to put into it? Are they going to reduce the supplement they are prepared to flow to individuals if they find, after they collect the information, that the program is going to cost considerably more than they thought it was going to cost? Or are they going to renege on the entire program, for whatever reason? What possible explanation could there be for a government with a majority being concerned that it will not put into place the legislation it is committed to, to establish its program that this legislation is enabling?

Mr Baird: It's the privacy commissioner.

Mrs McLeod: The member opposite says it's the privacy commissioner. The member opposite just assured this House that there had been due consultation with the privacy commissioner and that the privacy commissioner was satisfied that this bill was suitable.

I say to the member opposite, if the government wants to ensure that this child care supplement is put in place, there should be no barrier that the government can't overcome. If the government's enabling legislation is requiring information or requiring it in such a way that the privacy commissioner is liable to object in spite of the fact that he has apparently been consulted, then the government should fix the enabling legislation. In fact, the government should have made sure the enabling legislation was fine before the last days of the legislative session.

There should be no hesitation in the government's own mind, with its majority, that they are going to be able to put in place the child care supplement for working families before the end of March 1999, fully six months after the federal dollars were available to make this program possible. So I have to be a little bit sceptical, a little bit cynical and more than a little bit concerned that the government is so untrusting of its own agenda, of its own commitments, that they had to put an escape clause into enabling legislation that allows this supplement program to get off the ground.

I see that my colleagues in the New Democratic Party have shared some of that concern and some of that cynicism and that they are therefore bringing forward an amendment to the legislation. I think it's a wise amendment. They are clearly questioning this clause, as we are.

They clearly aren't trusting of this government to deliver on the child care supplement program. But they have been even more cynical than we have and want more protection against what this government may do, because they've proposed an amendment that makes it clear that if this government doesn't live up to its commitment to establish this child care supplement for working families by the end of March 1999, the government cannot take the \$100 million in federal money and run with it by using it to offset the payments they are obligated to make under the income assistance program, whether it is the social assistance program or the Family Benefits Act or the Ontario disability support plan. We will of course support the amendment because I think it was very wise of the New Democrats to bring the full measure of cynicism to bear in terms of what this government might intend to do, what they might not be held to do, in spite of the glowing commitments which they made in their budget speech of May 5.

You have to be a little bit cynical when you see a clause like this inserted in legislation, knowing the government has fully within its power the ability to bring in this legislation at any point they choose. Maybe it's the intention of the government not to bring the House back in time for us to approve the legislation before March 31, 1999, but I hate to think that's the case.

1620

I'm not going to take longer, because I think that there are some important pieces of legislation we need to deal with before this House adjourns for the summer and for who knows how long over the fall. I want first of all to recognize the fact that the child care supplement which this legislation is enabling is going to be of some benefit to working families, but it is certainly not going to offset the costs that they're experiencing of child care.

The family with earnings of under \$20,000 will get a maximum annual benefit of \$1,020 under this child care supplement. That's \$85 a month, and that's assuming that the government does not decide, when it collects its information and finds out that there are more needy families deserving and eligible for the supplement than they'd expected, to reduce the level of supplement they are committed to at this point. But \$85 a month is what's

expected to be flowed some time later this year to a family with earnings under \$20,000.

Let's recognize that child care for a preschooler in a regulated child care setting costs on average \$7,000 annually and requires a monthly expenditure of \$583. I know that families with an income of under \$20,000 will no doubt find a use for the extra \$85 a month, but in no way will that amount help those families to get quality regulated child care.

That brings me to my final concern that I want to address, that this new child care supplement program, touted as a new program even though there's no new government money from Ontario going into it, is in no way going to ensure that children in the province of Ontario will not be forced into second-rate, unregulated, informal, risky babysitting arrangements in order to get the care they need for their children.

The fact that people are more and more having to enter into unregulated care is directly related to the fact that this government has not seen fit to increase the numbers of subsidies that are available for child care in Ontario. In fact, we know this government's record on child care. We know that because of the cuts they first made when they came into government, we lost 9,000 subsidies for child care in this province. We know that there are at least 14,000 existing subsidies in jeopardy because municipalities have had the administrative costs of child care downloaded on to them, and they are not sure they can carry the increased administrative costs and still pay their 30% of the child care costs.

There is some real question about whether existing subsidies for child care are going to continue. Without subsidy, that family earning under \$20,000 will not be significantly benefited by the \$85 a month which the supplement provides them. That's why they're going to be forced more and more into second-rate, unregulated care and into the very risky ad hoc, informal babysitting arrangements which may be all they can afford, even with this supplement, and which this government has been too ready to condone as appropriate child care in Ontario. I refer to an article that was in the Globe and Mail two days ago, on June 23, where they describe the situation facing parents seeking child care in Ontario. It gives this one example:

"Hours after catching a first glimpse of her three-month-old focus on an ultrasound monitor, Lea Ray rushed to a nearby day care centre and registered her name on its growing waiting list.

"Word was that only parents sharp enough to place their names on a waiting list within months of conceiving could hope to land a day care space once maternity leave ended."

Why is that word out there that if you find that you are pregnant you're going to have to rush to get your child's name on a waiting list? It's because in Toronto the vacancy rate in the city's 725 licensed day care centres has dropped to zero for the first time. There is no place in a regulated child care centre in the entire city of Toronto for a new child who needs child care.

This government thinks that \$85 a month is going to offset the cost. They won't even be able to get their child into a regulated day care centre, and \$85 a month is not going to offset the cost of the babysitting arrangements which people are going to have to desperately seek if they are going to continue to be working families.

The other example in this same article is from Ottawa. At Aladin Childcare Services in Ottawa, parents are waiting more than two years to enrol their preschool-age children in the centre. "For a subsidized space," said executive director Diane O'Neill, "the waiting list is closer to five to six years."

I know the anguish that my daughter and son-in-law have gone through over the course of the last two months in a small community outside of Toronto where there is no regulated day care, no child care provision, trying to find some arrangement which will be suitable for their two preschool children, one of them being an infant.

I say to this government that you can tout the child care supplement for working families, and we will all be glad to see some relief for working families experiencing the cost of child care brought into place. We wish that it was coming into place sooner. We wish the cheques would be in people's hands much earlier than some time later this year. We wish there was some assurance that those cheques would ever arrive, rather than this clause in the bill that says, "Don't worry, we'll destroy your personal information if we decide we can't get the program up and running by the end of March 1999."

We wish all of those things were true, but even if this child care supplement is put in place and families are able to receive their \$85 a month in support, it will not in any way ensure that there is accessible, affordable, quality child care for the children of this province. On that agenda this government has rolled the clock back so far on all fronts that it is going to take a very long time before we can even hope to aspire to a situation in which my two grandchildren will have some assurance that there will be quality, accessible, affordable day care.

Ms Lankin: On a point of order, Speaker: Would you check and see if there's quorum.

The Acting Speaker: Check and see if there's quorum for me, please.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Further debate?

Ms Lankin: The bill we have before us today is a bill that's very limited in its scope. It's called "An Act to permit the Collection of Personal Information for the Payment of the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families."

This supplement was a commitment in the 1998 budget that the government was going to move to the implementation of this supplement, with at least a third of the money coming from the federal government in the way of a clawback under the national child benefit program. The

a sudden said, "We want second and third reading at the same time." The reason there's a process in which you take some time is so that you can examine concerns with the bill. I have an amendment that I wish to put forward so we're going to move into committee of the whole a little bit later this afternoon to deal with that amendment. I also have some questions and it, as a result of my questions, there are some other concerns which I would like to address or which even the government feels it might like to address, then there will be no opportunity because the government has indicated that it wants to move to third reading today. That's why the process doesn't normally work like that. In fact, it's extraordinary and it requires unanimous consent. Because it's the last day, none of us wants to hold the bill up, but the government has not proceeded in a rational way or in a way which allows for the development and passing of good legislation.

Let me for a moment talk about — this bill is an enabling bill and what it enables.

Madam Speaker, could I ask you to check and see if there's a quorum.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Marion Boyd): Is there a quorum?

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Continue debate, please

Ms. Leakin: I was about to speak about this bill from its perspective as enabling legislation. It is a piece of legislation that will enable down the road another program, for which the government has yet to introduce the legislation, to be implemented, that being a child care supplement.

The government, in its announcement of this, spoke with very glowing terms as if this child care supplement was the answer to many parents' child care concerns in this province, and I want to speak about that for a moment. While I'm sure no member of this House would be opposed to a program which provides some assistance to low-income working families for their child care, I think we have to examine what this program is, in light of what the history of the development of subsidized, quality and licensed child care spaces in child care centres has been in this province.

In the attempt of government to support working families and families on social assistance who require child care in order to get off social assistance and get into the workforce, the history of government has been to support the development of a high-quality child care system in this province. It is my contention that this piece of legislation to establish a child care supplement, which we will see the government introducing presumably in the fall, does nothing to contribute to the development of a quality, regulated child care system in Ontario; one that is affordable, one that recognizes the principles of early childhood education, the importance of early childhood education, and one that tries to ensure that our kids are being taken care of in an educational environment that is safe and healthy for them.

relationship between these programs is a little complicated, but as I speak to this bill I want to try and shed some light on that, because there are some elements of this that concern me in terms of the intent of the federal program, which I think is a good one, but how we see that being applied here in Ontario; who will benefit and, more to the point, who will be the losers in this scenario.

Speaking directly to this bill, first of all let me indicate that all this bill purports to do is to allow the government to collect the information that would be used, once there is legislation in the future to establish — I'm going to refer to it as a child care tax credit in the system. It's a little bit different from a tax credit. While it will be based on information collected through previous years' taxation on income tax forms, it's going to be paid out on a regular basis. So the government is referring to it as a supplement, but it still has a relationship to your taxable earnings and incomes and the amounts that you have paid.

Obviously, for any program like that, in order to determine eligibility first and foremost and at what level of payment a person would be eligible, the government must have information, so this bill sets out the ability for the government to collect the information that it feels is necessary.

1630

When this was announced in the budget, the finance minister said that this year families would be required to submit their application for this program by September 30, 1998. I find this interesting. We are rushing through this little four-page bill to get the collection of information up and running. I can only presume, because the government is not ready to proceed with the legislation that's actually going to establish the program. I would like to have before me the information that is establishing the program before I give the government carte blanche to collect all this information — you know, for what purposes? I think in terms of proper process that would be more appropriate.

That's fine, we don't have it before us.

If we're going to be asking members of the public to make application, according to the finance minister in his budget statement, by September 30 of this year for a program that doesn't yet exist, the parameters of which we don't know — we've got some broad-stroke description of it — there is something backwards in that to my way of thinking in terms of how we are approaching this.

They say that benefits would accrue from July 1998. That's when the federal program comes into effect, and there is a relationship and I will describe that in a moment, between this program and the federal benefits that are flowing. The first payment will be made to Ontarian working families a little bit later this year but would be reflective of benefits accruing to them from the period of July 1998. Not very good planning, not very good government. I would say, in terms of how we're approaching this. We're playing a little bit of catch-up. As a result, there are some concerns I have in terms of the way bill is structured.

This bill was only tabled a couple of weeks ago, three weeks ago maybe, and here we are, the last day that the Legislature is sitting, and the government yesterday all of

1640

The government's announcement I would argue does very little to contribute to the development or the further development of that child care system. The supplement that they're talking about has a maximum. If you are a low-income working family whose income is between \$5,000 and \$20,000 a year total, the maximum that you will be able to claim is \$85 a month. I ask members to actually think about this. If you are a low-income working family, let's say with an income of \$15,000, how could you afford to pay the money for a fully regulated, quality, licensed child care place in order to claim back and get \$85 a month? The average cost of a quality child care space is \$7,000 a year. This commitment isn't even one seventh of that. So this supplement in and of itself, while it's not bad — I'm not arguing that it's bad — is not going to enable parents who currently can't afford good quality child care to access it.

What it may do is help supplement unregulated, less expensive, cheaper and in many cases less safe, lower-quality babysitting services. That is of great concern to me. I argue that this, along with some of the changes that the Minister of Community and Social Services presented in a report she wrote during the time she was a parliamentary assistant, will actually move the market to that lower end. The supports and the assistance that are being provided move people to that lower end. I don't think that is in the best interests of our children. I don't think that is appropriate. I don't think that is putting in place, as I believe governments should be responsible for, the appropriate system of quality child care services for our citizens of this province, parents, to access.

I question the government's commitment on the child care front. You have to look at the record here. It was in the 1996 budget that the first child care announcement was made. The finance minister at that time made some bold statements. He talked about the fact that the government was going to be spending more money than any government had ever spent before on child care in the history of the province of Ontario. Those are the words that he used.

He announced \$200 million in new money, spread out over five years. That's \$40 million a year over the course of five years. In answer to questions, he indicated that was cumulative, that it would be \$40 million to the base budget one year, and the next year another \$40 million, which means it's \$80 million, and the next year it would be \$120 million. So in five years' time we understood there would be 200 million new dollars in the base budget. What happened? The first year following that announcement in the budget, not one penny was spent. The minister put a freeze on subsidies to child care spaces and in fact not only was that money not spent, but they cut money in other areas. There was a \$10-million fund in the Ministry of Education that had been put in place to

There has been much written in research in the field of child care, comparing the actual child care experience of those kids who are in an early education experience versus those children who are in unregulated care. While there are very many good caregivers who provide in-home, unregulated care service, there are unfortunately too many who are not good. There are unfortunately too many horror stories about children who have been left in unregulated babysitting situations who have been subject to abuse, who have been subject to neglect; stories of how parents have found out, much to their horror, that a sheet has been put down on the floor and the kids have been told, "That's your space; you stay on that sheet for the junk food," or they have been plunked down with bags of essentially babysits them. That's a very different type of experience than what a child would experience in a regulated child care setting, whether that be a centre-based setting or regulated, licensed home care.

One of the things we believe profoundly is that there has to be enough of a stock of child care spaces, if I can put it that way, available in our communities for parents to access, and they have to be accessible in the sense of being affordable as well. The way in which that has been done in the past is for governments to contribute to the physical space, the construction of child care centres, and to contribute to subsidizing a certain number of spots for low-income parents. Where full-fee-paying parents can afford their share, the centre however, overall, has support from subsidies to support those parents who can't afford the full fee.

Over the years we have developed a very broad system in this province. It's not universal. I wish it were. We have made attempts by putting in place supports; for example, a program in which, whenever there was a new school built, it was part of the policy direction of the province that a child care centre had to be included in that school. Doesn't that make sense? The kids who come from their pre-kindergarten early childhood education experience into junior or senior kindergarten have a relationship with that school. That's a logical place to locate it. It's in the community. It's close to home.

There have also been supports in the past to help employers establish child care so that parents of very young children who don't want to leave them in the community, who want to be able to take them to the workplace, mothers who breastfeed, for example, and have infants in child care, can at the workplace go to the child care centre during the day. There have been supports for those kinds of programs.

As a result of this, over the years, in a combination of come-regulated child care, child care centres in the community, workplace child care centres and organizations like family resource centres and toy-lending libraries that provide another level of support to parenting in our communities, we have developed quite an enviable child care system. Much remains to improve, I would argue, but I think we are in danger of losing much of it at this time.

provided for the construction of child care centres in schools. They cancelled that. They said, "No more. That's not the mandate of the Ministry of Education. No more support for child care centres in schools."

There was a \$50-million fund within the Ministry of Community and Social Services for the capital construction of child care centres, and the government cut that. The minister explained it by saying, "We're not into bricks and mortar. These groups can go out there and find their own financing." I've got to tell you, it doesn't work like that. I've been around the block a few times on this issue, but even in this last year, with some groups who were losing their child care centres and they would have to go out and build in the community. They went to great lengths. One of them was in Minister — at the time — Sanderson's riding. They asked him to help in trying to bring them together with corporate sponsors and with financial institutions, but they are a non-profit parent board. They don't have the capital or the equity to back this up and they couldn't get financing anywhere. The minister must not understand how this works out there and that essentially her decision to cut those funds was sounding the death knell for the expansion of quality licensed child care in child care centres in this province.

That great, grand announcement, "More money than any government's ever spent before" — and we hear that kind of superlative talk a lot from the government — what came of it? Not one penny of that first year instalment of \$40 million was spent. The government put the freeze on and cut the other programs. Where the previous Rae government had put in place the higher level of provincial participation in cost-sharing for subsidies — because under Jobs Ontario, which was the program we had put in place to try and help people get off social assistance and into the workplace, we recognized that those were additional costs that municipalities would have to bear and we wanted to ensure that the child care spaces were there. So instead of cost-sharing, we said we'd pay 100% instead of just the normal 80% the province paid. The new government cancelled that as well, and many of those spaces were lost in the communities.

We saw subsidized spaces lost; we saw funding for community-based child care centres and the capital costs on the buildings lost; we saw the \$10 million for capital construction of child care centres in schools lost; and not a penny of the "more money than ever before in any other government in the history of Ontario" spent. That was the first year after that announcement.

What happened in year two? We hit the 1997 budget and the government says: "Forget that. We said we were going to spend that money on subsidized child care and, by the way, we didn't spend a penny, but we'll just kind of gloss over that. We're going to spend that same money again and we're going to spend it now on a child care tax cut. This is our next big announcement and we're going to" — you know, with fanfare — "support families out there through this child care tax announcement."

Not only have they not spent a penny, it meant that there wouldn't be a penny spent that year, because they announced that in their budget in the spring of the year and people wouldn't be eligible for it until following the next taxation year. So it would be in 1998 before they would get any of that money, if they even knew about it, if they applied, if they were eligible, and there were no clear rules around what the eligibility was.

We now have gone through two full years and not a penny of that grand announcement of "We're going to spend more money on child care than any government ever before in the history of the province of Ontario" has been spent, two years later.

What happens in 1998? This is the third budget now that we have grand announcements about child care. The government announced yet again another version of what it's going to do to spend this child care money, not a penny of which has been spent. If I appear cynical at all about the government's intentions here, you may understand why, you may feel some sympathy with me, because the records not very good. I hope the members of the government would even acknowledge that the record so far is not very good.

Now we come to the announcement in the 1998 budget and this, as I mentioned before, is for a child care supplement for low-income working families. This doesn't help anybody on social assistance who's trying to get off social assistance. It's not across the board. It's targeted at the low-income working family and it provides a maximum of \$85 a month. Nice, warm, fuzzy. I'm glad that people will get that little bit of money, if they have enough money to put up in the first place to pay for child care expenses so they'd become eligible.

I worry that in effect this is another empty promise in that there won't be the volume of take-up by people because it is not realistic to expect that someone who is earning \$7,000 a year or \$10,000 a year could afford a \$7,000 quality child care space if there are no subsidies — and the government has not put any more money into subsidies. How could they afford to pay for that in order to claim back their \$85 a month? Come on, folks, take a look at this.

I don't think this is a very effective way for those families it does help and maybe those over \$20,000, because there is still a range of people over \$20,000 who can claim some of this, but it decreases; it will be less than \$85 a month. Maybe some families will get a little bit of change. For them, I say thank you to the government. But this is not going to provide the kind of support that we need for working families in terms of accessing affordable, quality licensed child care in Ontario.

1650

I have a couple of areas of concern with the bill itself. I just want to highlight them, because I know there are some staff from the Ministry of Finance here that I can see who will be coming to the floor when we move into committee of the whole. If I can perhaps highlight a couple of the areas for which I have questions, it might be helpful to them so that they can be prepared and be of assistance to the parliamentary assistant as we're going through this

House. The member for Beaches-Woodbine is outlining the questions she's going to be asking about this bill and giving the staff an opportunity to understand what the questions are. I think it would help our proceedings to go along more quickly if she were able to do that. Thank you.

Ms Lankin: Thanks very much, Madam Speaker. I appreciate that.

Section 3 provides that personal information collected under this act can be used for purposes of tax credits, deductions or benefits under the Income Tax Act.

There's nothing in that section that specifically says, "for the purposes of child care, tax credits or deductions," for example. What is envisioned by that? Why would there be the crossover? Is that just a standard clause that is inserted in all collection-of-information legislation by government, and what does the privacy commissioner think about that?

I see a little bit of Big Brother and I worry a little bit when I see us giving powers to government to use information for purposes totally unrelated to the purpose of the act. Perhaps I am wrong in my understanding of that, but I would like some clarification on that.

I don't have before me the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, but with respect to subsection 3(4), which provides for an exception to subsection 17(2) of the freedom of information act, I would just like some clarification of what the purpose and intent of that is.

Subsection 3(5) also relates to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and it suggests that any information that is under the Ministry of Finance purview at this point in time, that they've collected, for whatever reason they may have collected it in the past, may be used by the same ministry for the purposes described in this act, in other words, for determining eligibility for the legislation yet to come establishing the child care supplement, "and that use shall be deemed to be for a purpose that is consistent with the purpose for which the personal information was obtained or compiled."

Again, I would be interested in the privacy commissioner's view of this. I see how that is enabling. I see if there is information with respect to property tax rolls or sales tax or what — I don't know what it is the Ministry of Finance may have — but I can see how, from a commonsense point of view, you'd want it to be available and to work cooperatively with other programs the government is running. But if you pass a piece of legislation in this House and say the Ministry of Finance can collect information for this specific purpose, it seems wrong to me to then down the road pass another piece of legislation and say, "By the way, anything they collected, even though the law said it was for that express purpose, can now be used over in this piece of legislation and it will be deemed to be consistent with the purpose that it was collected for."

It's retroactively amending a piece of legislation that's not even before us. I'm sure it's probably done all the time. I'm sure it's one of those legislative tricks in terms of how we get around what some people might call red tape; I don't know. But from a protection of privacy — that concerns me. I feel that is an inappropriate way. I

Mr Sealey, I can see that you are listening — always, I

now, I will run through some of these questions.

Section 2 sets out that the Ministry of Finance can collect and use information from a variety of sources, municipal government, federal government and others like that. It sets out under subsection 2(2) the type of personal information that's referred to in subsection 2(1). It puts some limits on the type of personal information the government can collect, although there are some sections later that interact with parts of the freedom of information and privacy act that sort of open all that up again. In any event, subsection 2(2) sets out things like name, social insurance number, the amount of child care expenses allowed as a deduction under income tax, name and date of birth of the applicant or child, all those sorts of things.

I was interested in the remarks of the previous speaker, who said that this bill didn't set out in it any requirement for people to file expenses or receipts with respect to their child care costs. I was thinking when I heard that, actually, that is probably more appropriate in the bill to come, the bill that actually sets out the nature of the child care supplement program or in the regulations thereof.

says, "Amounts paid as child care expenses by the individual or the individual's cohabiting spouse for each child." What made me click on to that was this question of whether receipts would be required. I will be asking in what form the government will require that information to be submitted. Is it enough for me to say, "I pay \$7,000 a year"? Do I have to write a letter? Do I have to provide a receipt? Where is that set out? Where is the authority to define that particular form of submitting the information?

As I look through here, I believe I'm right in that I don't see any general power for regulation making under this legislation. Normally, if legislation provides for information to be submitted, if it's going to be submitted in a certain prescribed form, there would be a section that sets out the power for the government to pass regulations with respect to that, and that regulation-making power needs to be in the legislation. It's not here.

I envision that this summer there will be information going out to people — I'm sure glossy and colourful, as an aside — information will be going out to people about this. They'll be invited to apply, and they will have to submit information in order to determine their eligibility. We don't know what the next piece of legislation that guess we'll see that in the next piece of legislation that comes. But presumably they'll be told they have to submit the information in some form. What legislative authority is there for that, when there is no regulation-making power

there?

I'd also like some information with respect to section 3: "Personal information collected under this act may also be used to determine the eligibility of the individual or of his or her cohabiting spouse for a tax credit, deduction or benefit under the Income Tax Act (Ontario), and the amount thereof."

The Acting Speaker: Member for Beaches-Woodbine, would you mind? There are too many loud conversations happening on the government side of the

think we should be more express in terms of our intent here.

If there are types of information we are aware that the Ministry of Finance has which would be useful for the purpose of this act, name it. Make it clear. These broad, sweeping statements that allow government to trade information, even between itself, is of concern. I think that we should have — it's one of the reasons why I'm concerned about the process today. When we move into committee of the whole shortly some answers I get may be satisfactory but there may be some things that even the parliamentary assistant may be concerned about in response to points I am raising. Yet the government's intent is to move immediately to third reading. There's a need for a breathing space.

I would encourage the parliamentary assistant to speak to his House leader as the clock ticks on because perhaps, if there are a couple of areas where we see we're going to need some further refinement to the legislation, it perhaps would behoove us to consider it in committee of the whole — leaving it at the end of that stage, reporting the bill out and not calling it for third reading today but doing some further work on amendments over the summer and dealing with this as soon as the House resumes.

Last, I want to indicate that I will be tabling an amendment to this legislation. I'll just set out briefly for the members of the Legislature the intent of that legislation.

Currently in the bill section 5 sets out that if the legislation yet to come — this is the legislation that will establish the Ontario child care supplement for working families; we don't have that legislation in front of us yet — if that legislation isn't passed and doesn't receive royal assent by March 31, 1999, all the information that has been collected under this piece of legislation will be destroyed. That's a cautionary clause and I'm sure it's put in place to respond to concerns that the privacy commissioner would have about that information being collected and then perhaps never used. Who knows how many other pieces of legislation out there have these little clauses that say, "If you have it, you can use it for a purpose and then say it's the same as the purpose that the legislation said you could only collect it for." It does show you why the concerns I'm raising have some validity.

1700

There's a cautionary clause there, and we accept that. We think that is useful and it's appropriate to have. But there's another little trick in this whole program, and that's the relationship between this child care supplement and the federal government program, the national child benefit. That national child benefit is a federal government commitment to provide dollars in support of child welfare, child wellbeing, to low-income families; not just working families, as in the legislation the Ontario Harris government is talking about, but to all low-income families. That federal money flows through — and that starts next month — directly to the lowest-income families in this province: those on social assistance, on family benefits, and those who are in the low-income working bracket. That money is meant, on the part of the federal

What they have done in other provinces is they have put together a pool from that money to support drug benefits, denial, vision benefits, those sorts of things I outlined, for those families, to help them move off social assistance, so they don't lose all of that coverage, so the

What they have done in other provinces is they have put together a pool from that money to support drug benefits, denial, vision benefits, those sorts of things I outlined, for those families, to help them move off social assistance from whom the money is being taken.

Part of the deal between the federal and provincial people we're talking about.

Let me explain to you. We encourage families to try and get some work, to try and have some income, to try and work their way off social assistance. There is a range in which, if they get some income, that gets deducted from their social assistance. If they work a part-time job, for example, maybe one day a week or so, that money is deducted from their benefits. It allows them to start to earn up to a certain amount until they become ineligible.

For thousands of families who are in that situation, who receive just a little bit of top-up of social assistance to their income but are also eligible for support for drug benefits — important for their kids — denial, vision benefits, that federal benefit will be just enough to top their things, that provincial government has said they are going to make them ineligible therefore for social assistance, and they lose those other supports and benefits: the drug card, the vision and dental care. We're talking poor, poor kids here. Let's not get confused in terms of the people we're talking about.

The federal government agreed to it. It is an agreement between the two levels of government. So it's not just blaming across the floor here; it's kind of a pox on all your houses. I don't understand why a program that's been put in place to help the poorest children in this country is being denied to the poorest of the poorest children in this country. But there you have it. Every dollar the federal government sends to a family on social assistance, the provincial government, dollar for dollar, takes it back. It has bad effects.

Let me explain to you. We encourage families to try and get some work, to try and have some income, to try and work their way off social assistance. There is a range in which, if they get some income, that gets deducted from their social assistance. If they work a part-time job, for example, maybe one day a week or so, that money is deducted from their benefits. It allows them to start to earn up to a certain amount until they become ineligible.

recipient families starting next month. As the federal government flows it through, the provincial government will yank it out of their hand. My contention is, if they don't pass the legislation to set up the program in which they will spend that money to support families and kids, then they don't have a right to that money and the legislation should make that very clear.

With that, let me wrap up by saying that, overall, I think this is not at all a commitment on the part of the government to affordable, accessible, quality child care — quite the opposite; it moves the market in the direction of unregulated and often unsafe, unhealthy situations for our children. It is a complete reversal of the government's budget commitment two years ago, in 1997, when they announced money that would have made them a penny of that has been spent. It's a complete reversal of that.

While I certainly don't object to a child care supplement program, there are far greater needs with respect to child care in Ontario that the government is not addressing. That gives me great concern.

I know that we will pass this bill today. I look forward to the fall to see the terms and breadth of the child care supplement legislation when they bring that forward. I hope that over the course of the summer the government may reflect on that and realize that it is important that it look to also providing benefits — continued drug, dental and vision kinds of benefits — to families on social assistance or just coming off of social assistance so that we can truly help people, truly, as you in your language say, give them a hand up and make it possible for people to leave the world of social assistance, but to do so in a way where their families have the supports for them to work and the supports for their kids to be healthy.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? Seeing no further debate, Mr Baird has moved second reading of Bill 28. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? The motion carries.

1710

House in committee of the whole.

CHILD CARE SUPPLEMENT
INFORMATION COLLECTION ACT, 1998
LOI DE 1998 SUR LA COLLECTE
DES RENSEIGNEMENTS NÉCESSAIRES
À L'OCTROI DU
SUPPLÉMENT DE REVENU
POUR LES FRAIS DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Consideration of Bill 28, An Act to permit the Collection of Personal Information for the Payment of the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families / Projet de loi 28, Loi permettant la collecte de renseignements personnels en vue du versement du supplément de revenu de l'Ontario pour les familles travailleuses ayant des frais de garde d'enfants.

poorest of poor kids can get their teeth fixed, for example, even though they've got this little bit of a benefit coming from the government. That, to me, would be a much better way to spend this money, but this government's made a different decision.

What I want to say, however, is that if this government is prepared in legislation today to say, "If we don't get the child care supplement passed and royal assent by March 1999, then we'll make the legislation we're looking at passing today null and void; we'll tear up the information we've collected," I want one more commitment from them. I want a commitment that the money they are going to be clawing back, dollar for dollar, from those poorest of poor families in this province, because they got a cheque from the federal government and the province is saying, "Okay, you put it in that pocket, we're taking it out of the other pocket," I want a commitment that they won't keep that money either, that that money will revert to those families. If not, it is a grand ripoff by the provincial government of dollars that the federal government has sent to the poorest families; the provincial government taking it back and not spending it on anything that will benefit poor kids and low-income families.

If you're prepared to acknowledge that there is even a remote possibility that the legislation you refer to here, which this enables, may not be passed and therefore you have a commitment in the legislation to tie up the information you've collected for the purposes of determining eligibility for that program, I also wish that you will put in place, through my amendment, a commitment that the money you're clawing back from those poorest of poor kids won't be simply transferred over into government coffers and not applied for the purpose for which it is intended.

It's a simple amendment. If you truly intend to bring forward this program in a timely fashion, and the legislation for it, I can see no reason why you would object to my amendment, because it won't be of any import then, right? You will have passed the legislation before the key date. That, to me, is a critical point with respect to ensuring that we protect the intent of a program which is to provide support to poor children, to try and help poor children gain access to the benefits that will give them a good start in life so they have a reasonable expectation of good, healthy outcomes as their life goes on.

That provision for the Ontario government to claw back the money from social assistance doesn't appear in any legislation yet, but we do know that there are regulations that have been written under the Ontario Works Act and the Ontario Disability Support Program Act and the Family Benefits Act that have yet to be gazetted but that would give effect to that — at least I think they've yet to be gazetted. In any event, when those regulations come into effect, then the government will be able to claw that money back.

It's not as if we won't see that until they pass their Ontario child care supplement program sometime in the fall, the legislation we haven't seen yet; they will be taking that money back from social assistance/welfare

Mr John R. Baird (Nepcan): I would make two requests: that legal staff from the Ministry of Finance be allowed to enter the floor and that I would sit at the front.

The Acting Chair (Mrs Martion Boyd): Agreed. If we are ready to proceed, are there any amendments and, if so, to which section?

Mrs Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Madam Chair, I will be moving an amendment to subsections 5(2) and (3).

The Acting Chair: Thank you. Any other amendments? If there are none in sections 1 through 4, are there any questions or comments?

Ms Lankin: Just following up on the questions I put in my participation in second reading debate, with respect to paragraph 7 of subsection 2(2), as an example, which reads "Amounts paid as child care expenses by the individual or the individual's cohabiting spouse for each child," that is a description of the type of personal information referred to in subsection (1) that the Minister of Finance may collect. Not set out anywhere that I can see in the legislation is the prescribed form for submitting that information. I wonder if the parliamentary assistant could respond to that concern.

Mr Baird: I'd simply indicate that, much like the current income tax practice would be, at this point it would seem logical that a receipt would not be required to be submitted but that it would have to be available from the claimant if requested, much like the current provisions of the Income Tax Act with respect to tax credits such as the Ontario property tax credit and the federal child care deduction expense. Obviously, though, the administrative requirements of the legislation are still under development, so it's not possible to give a definitive answer as to receipts, but it would seem that would be the best practice that has been used in the past.

Ms Lankin: Just to follow up on that, if the administrative requirements of this legislation have not yet been developed, I don't see any provision in the legislation for regulation-making power. How will you in fact have legislative authority for those requirements?

Mr Baird: There's no legal requirement that a form have a particular shape, so we don't have a prescribed form under legislation. I suppose we could make it, but in this piece of legislation we don't. The person who would be applying for the benefit of course wouldn't be required to, so under the current practice it's not a prescribed form. **Ms Lankin:** Is there a possibility a person could submit information which the ministry would determine to be inadequate for the basis of determining eligibility in a positive sense, and then on what grounds would you be denying eligibility if there's nothing clearly set out either in legislation or regulation in terms of what nature and form the information must either be submitted in or must be available in to substantiate?

Mr Baird: Under this legislation, it basically just allows the government of Ontario to collect the relevant information that is required. Obviously, with the legislation the government would intend to present in the fall, we would have to spell out the entitlements for that. We

are just right now looking to collect information. Rather, we would not have to police the process, because of course the fall legislation hasn't been passed yet, so that would be contained in the fall legislation.

Ms Lankin: Could I ask the parliamentary assistant why the government is proceeding in this way? Why do we not have the full legislation in front of us, then, that sets out the type of program, the eligibility requirements and the thresholds that people must meet in terms of evidentiary proof to be eligible? I fail to understand that, unless the answer is simply that the government didn't get the bill ready and now they're just trying to sort of cover off the eventuality of that and get the forms out into people's hands this summer. It does not seem to me to be a rational approach to this legislation.

Mr Baird: We are currently in negotiations with the federal government on a whole host of issues relating to this issue. Also, the child tax credit from the federal government, of course, the national benefit, hasn't begun to flow. That will happen next week. It was always the intent to follow through in the fall. Traditionally, the Ministry of Finance has presented two budget bills, one presented with the budget in early May and then another in the fall session of the Legislature.

Ms Lankin: I won't get into debate — this is not the appropriate time — but I think this is a shoddy process and I think it's inappropriate to be asking this Legislature to rush this bill through at this point when we don't have the rest of it.

Let me move to subsection 3(1), which allows personal information collected under this act to be used to determine eligibility of individuals for tax credits, deductions or benefits under the Income Tax Act. Are there any restrictions on which tax credit benefits or deductions we are speaking of here? Is this wide open, and why is this clause included?

If I may, let me just elaborate on this. It may be of some assistance to the staff. Subsection 3(1) talks about: "Personal information collected under this act may also be used to determine the eligibility of the individual or...spouse for a tax credit, deduction or benefit under the Income Tax Act (Ontario) and the amount thereof." I'm concerned about information collected here being used for other purposes. What is it that you're envisioning? It again seems to me to be a very broad brush and very intrusive of privacy.

Mr Baird: The member indicated in her remarks at second reading that she was sure this was done all the time and that she had a concern about this. That concern is one, with respect to a whole host of Ontario tax credits, the property tax or the retail sales tax, so it just would seem only prudent that if someone is applying — not that the government would go out after it, but if someone is applying for a particular tax credit at the provincial Ministry of Finance, that we could use that information for the other two or three credits with which they would apply.

Ms Lankin: Have you got a standard clause that I would find in those other pieces of legislation providing those tax credits, like sales tax credit or the Ontario tax credit or whatever? Will I find this same clause in those other pieces of legislation?

Mr Baird: Under the Freedom of Information Act we would have the authority to collect that information under the act that established it. Obviously, the act that would establish this benefit will be introduced in the fall, so you obviously wouldn't need to, with the other two examples that you mentioned.

The Acting Chair: Mrs McLeod.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): Madam Chair, I don't particularly want to prolong the session, but the answers are making the question even more pertinent and I would ask exactly what information you are seeking to gather under this clause that might entitle somebody to eligibility to any of the other deductions that you're not already able to collect under the acts that established those other benefits.

Mr Baird: In response to the question, if there were an existing act with which we collect information, this wouldn't be required, but given that there's no existing act with respect to the benefit, it is required. I guess the issue would be to avoid duplicate requests for information. This wouldn't be required if the legislation hadn't been passed but, as has been said earlier, we indicated we would be pursuing legislation with this in the fall.

Mrs McLeod: I appreciate my colleague having raised this. The dilemma for us obviously is that the Legislature is about to adjourn and we want this supplement to be made available to working families. But as my colleague has noted, this is really shoddy work.

This clause is a very sweeping clause, allowing you to gather any kind of personal information that's set out in the act, and the act is very general in terms of the categories of information that can be collected. The legislation is supposed to be about enabling. It is because you haven't got the other act in place and it's supposed to enable you to collect the information for the purposes of that other act. That we understand from the balance of what's in this three-and-a-half page document.

But this clause allows you to collect information and to use that information to determine eligibility of the individual or of his or her spouse for a tax credit deduction or benefit under the Income Tax Act. It's not specifically referencing the child care supplement. The rest of the act does. This clause goes beyond that. We don't understand why it's there. Surely a sweeping clause like that, when you've supposedly consulted with the privacy committee, didn't get in here by accident.

It doesn't look like a standard clause. My colleague's question was, is it a standard clause in every piece of legislation? It is really unacceptable for that kind of clause, with that kind of invasion of personal privacy, to be entered into a very small piece of legislation if it has no purpose at all.

Ms Lankin: I just want to add to that. It seems to me that this clause, if it is as you suggest in here, because we don't have the child care supplement legislation passed yet, should specifically reference that this information may be used for determining eligibility of the individual for a tax credit reduction or benefit under the income tax for the child care supplement. If that's what your intent is, that's what the legislation should say. This is inappropriate, the breadth of this clause as it's set out here.

Mr Baird: Perhaps I could just respond to the issue. This is not, in all fairness, what by any definition general or sweeping information would be collected blanket through Bill 28. There are nine specific sets of information that are detailed in the previous section of the bill, section 2. I guess the intention is to avoid duplication.

One of the concerns that I understand was raised by some of the members of the official opposition, which I think were real and legitimate, centred around what the Information and Privacy Commissioner had to say about this act. I think it's important to get this on the record to be very clear that the Information and Privacy Commissioner was consulted in the drafting of this bill. The recommendations that came out of that office are all reflected in this bill. I mentioned them earlier. The bill should deal only with the collection of personal information for the supplement. The IPC recognizes that special legislative authority would be necessary to obtain the information in time to verify it shortly after the actual enactment of the supplement in the fall. They recommended that the information collected be destroyed if the supplement was not enacted. The privacy commissioner was consulted in this act and doesn't have a problem with section 3.

The Acting Chair: Just for the information of the members of the House, there was no time limit on committee of the whole. We made an error and hadn't switched the clock back to the regular clock. So if people were getting concerned about committee of the whole, it's all right.

Ms Lankin: I just want to indicate that I do not believe that the parliamentary assistant has answered my concerns with respect to the breadth of this clause — let me qualify that statement — certainly not to my satisfaction.

I believe that it might be prudent for us to look at refusing that section, deeming that section, and in the child care supplement legislation that comes forward this fall you can put in place the appropriate provision to allow the use of the information that's been collected under Bill 28. I wonder if the parliamentary assistant could just

approach. I don't want to take much more time on this.

Mr Baird: I would simply indicate that this information may be needed. I think the public has spoken very clearly in terms of their reaction, as to government, that if you're applying for an Ontario sales tax credit or an Ontario property tax credit, to then in the future lose this requirement for simply another Ontario Ministry of Finance tax credit, there's simply no need to go to people three times. This is required through December, and the ministry's position and the government's position would be that we need it.

1730

Ms Lankin: I just want to say that that answer is totally different from every other answer we've had so far with respect to the intent of that clause and I'm tied off in terms of the process. I do not want to upset the House leaders' schedule, particularly with respect to the Women's College bill, which was why I requested earlier that that bill be dealt with before this so we had sufficient time to deal with legislation in an appropriate manner. This is how you make bad laws.

Mrs McLeod: I'm going to take time to add my concern. It is absolutely irresponsible to bring forward what seems to be a very small piece of legislation with clauses that are so indefensible and inapplicable. The strategy of the government to insist that this legislation be called prior to the calling of the Women's College Hospital bill this afternoon is putting us in a position where we feel compelled to move on. There should be extensive debate and considerably more explanation of this kind of clause being included in this legislation. It's only because of the government's essentially — is "blackmail" a parliamentary term, Madam Chair? — of this process that we are going to have to move on.

The Acting Chair: Are there any further comments or questions on sections 1 through 4?

Shall sections 1 through 4 carry?

Ms Lankin: Madam Chair, sorry. Procedurally, is there an opportunity to record votes on any of these sections? There is a section I would like to vote against. Perhaps if you can call each section individually.

The Acting Chair: Section 1 first: Shall section 1 carry? Carried.

Shall section 2 carry? Carried.

Shall section 3 carry? I hear "no."

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

I believe the ayes carry.

Shall section 4 carry? Carried.

Ms Lankin has an amendment to section 5.

Ms Lankin: I have circulated copies to members of the other parties and to the table.

I move that section 5 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsections:

"National child benefit

"(2) If legislation establishing the Ontario child care supplement for working families has not received royal

money, it'll simply end up in Ernie Eves's coffers and not helping the poor kids in this province, and that, I think, is untenable.

Mr Baird: In all fairness, our reinvestments have already begun. The Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program has already been announced, so we've already begun the reinvestment even prior to the program being enacted.

The Acting Chair: Any further comments on the amendment to section 5? Seeing none, shall the amendment carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."
All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Shall section 5 carry? I hear a "no."

All those in favour? All those opposed? The section carries.

Shall sections 6 through 8 carry? Carried.

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? Agreed.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Madam Chair, I move that the committee rise and report.

The Acting Chair: Mr Sterling has moved that the committee rise and report. Agreed? Agreed.

The committee of the whole House begs to report one bill without amendment and asks for leave to sit again.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marion Boyd): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

Hon Mr Sterling: Madam Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to call third reading of Bill 28 this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

1740

CHILD CARE SUPPLEMENT

INFORMATION COLLECTION ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 SUR LA COLLECTE

DES RENSEIGNEMENTS NÉCESSAIRES

À L'OCTROI DU

SUPPLÉMENT DE REVENU

POUR LES FRAIS DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Mr Baird, on behalf of Mr Eves, moved third reading of the following bill:

Information for the Payment of the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families / Projet de loi 28, Loi permettant la collecte de renseignements personnels en vue du versement du supplément de revenu de l'Ontario pour les familles travailleuses ayant des frais de garde d'enfants.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs Marion Boyd): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Orders of the day?

social assistance, we also want to help to ensure that those families get off social assistance and to help the working poor, those real heroes out there who are working very hard, often at rates not comparable with social assistance rates. We've introduced a whole host of initiatives over the last number of years in terms of transition. We have the earn-back, which is 100%, we have STEP, we make it easy for families to get off —

Ms Lankin: You're going to claim credit for the Trillium drug plan?

Mr Baird: Well, we've expanded the Ontario Trillium drug plan.

She mentioned the federal government. It's also the case in other provinces. Ontario is not the only one. Nova

Ms Lankin: I didn't say it was.

Mr Baird: To be fair, she didn't. But it's not just the

federal government doing it. Nova Scotia is undertaking

two primary reinvestment initiatives, the Nova Scotia

child benefit for low-income families with children and a

range of healthy child development initiatives. Prince

Edward Island is seeking reinvestments designed to

promote healthy childhood development. New Brunswick

is seeking similar. Manitoba is seeking early intervention

and healthy child development programs. Saskatchewan is

doing the same, and Alberta and British Columbia. So

Ontario is not the only province pursuing this option. That

is the option that other provinces are pursuing and that we

want to take.

To be very clear on one final point, we've been

extremely clear in the Minister of Community and Social

Services' negotiations with the federal government, as

have all the other governments, and there's been a com-

mitment coming out of the federal-provincial meetings, to

which we've agreed, that we will release an annual

accountability report for both the reinvestments to allow

them to be measured on how successful the initiative has

been in addressing child poverty. There's a clear account-

ability framework to ensure that this money goes to help

exactly those it was designed to help.

Ms Lankin: The parliamentary assistant once again

misses the point. In response to the provincial examples

you raised, let me tell you, from coast to coast, from BC to

PEI, and even including the province of Alberta, which

you often look to as a model, they are putting in place

programs which will provide the very needed access to

drug benefits, dental and vision care for those low-income

kids if they come off social assistance. You are not doing

that. You are not providing the help in that way. What this

program will do is ensure that the poorest kids don't get

support.

However, that's not what we're debating here. We're

debating what you will bring in in the fall: the legislation

that enables it. My point is simply that if you're prepared

to say that if the legislation isn't enacted you'll rip up the

information, I want you to also say that you'll give the

money back to the poorest families. If you don't have a

plan in place, with legislative authority to spend that

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to call the 13th order.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Sterling has asked for unanimous consent to call the 13th order. Agreed? Agreed.

SUNNYBROOK AND WOMEN'S
COLLEGE HEALTH SCIENCES
CENTRE ACT, 1998
LOI DE 1998 SUR LE
CENTRE APPELÉ SUNNYBROOK
AND WOMEN'S COLLEGE
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

Mrs Marland, on behalf of Mrs Witmer, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 51, An Act to amalgamate Sunnybrook Hospital and Orthopaedic and Arthritis Hospital and to transfer all assets and liabilities of Women's College Hospital to the amalgamated hospital / Projet de loi 51, Loi fusionnant les hôpitaux nommés Sunnybrook Hospital et Orthopaedic et Arthritis Hospital et transférant l'actif et le passif de l'hôpital nommé Women's College Hospital à l'hôpital issu de la fusion.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algonia): Madam Speaker, on a point of order: Do we have unanimous consent to divide the time among the three parties?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs Marion Boyd): Do we have unanimous consent to divide the time between the three parties? Agreed.

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [children's issues]): This bill was presented on behalf of Women's College Hospital and the Orthopaedic and Arthritis Hospital.

The hospitals have been working hard for the past year to develop a governance structure which addresses the unique needs of their representative clients. It is very positive that they have come up with a framework which recognizes this diversity. The discussions which led to this framework have been a challenge for these three hospitals because they serve such different client bases.

The hospitals have been working for over a year to reach this agreement, and this is the framework which, in their opinion, works best for them and for their communities. This is the consensus reached by these three institutions. This is what the three hospitals believe they need to make the merger work the best for them. This is implementing this consensus arrangement.

I would just like to quote Gail Regan, who is with the Friends of Women's College Hospital and the past chair of that board, in a letter that she wrote to the Minister of Health, Elizabeth Witmer, on June 23, this week:

"Friends of Women's College Hospital have had the opportunity to review the draft legislation to create this new hospital, and are pleased that it offers such promise for a strong collaborative partnership. We hope that the

No one who truly cares about Women's College Hospital will forget that the hospital restructuring commission simply ordered Women's College Hospital closed just as the Hart's government is responsible for the closing of hospitals because their hospital restructuring commission is not indeed at arm's length, the Hart's government was prepared to close Women's College Hospital. That was a shocking decision and anyone who knew what Women's College Hospital had achieved, what it meant to women, was dismayed that there was no understanding of that by the commission or by the government that set up the hospital destruction commission and gave it a free rein.

Women's College Hospital has been, not a pioneer, but the pioneer in focusing on women's health. It has been a difficult, frustrating fight to build a realization over the years that issues of women's health are different and that they need a special focus. It is still a difficult fight to ensure that there is research on women's health issues and that medical research generally will use women as well as men as its base. It has been a fight to make society and the health care system and the justice system understand the support that is needed by women who are victims of rape. All have been fights, and Women's College Hospital has been winning those fights on all fronts. The people who are and have been Women's College Hospital have been visionary, they have been creative, and the leadership has been phenomenal, and it was all about to be

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): I will reluctantly not oppose this legislation. My reluctance is because I cannot condone what this government is doing to Women's College Hospital and the preference of myself and the preference of my colleagues would be to continue to fight with our opposition in every possible way to this government's destruction of Women's College Hospital and its blatant closure of hospitals across the province.

I will be supporting this legislation because it is what is left to Women's College Hospital. It is here because of the commitment and the persistence and the refusal to give up of the Friends of Women's College Hospital. We applaud the courage of these Friends of Women's College Hospital, we applaud their determination to fight for a hospital dedicated to women's health and truly unique in the leadership it has provided and the support it has offered to women.

On behalf of the government, I would like to express the congratulations of all of us to all the people who have been involved in reaching this consensus and helping to come to this decision.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): I will reluctantly not oppose this legislation. My reluctance is because I cannot condone what this government is doing to Women's College Hospital and the preference of myself and the preference of my colleagues would be to continue to fight with our opposition in every possible way to this government's destruction of Women's College Hospital and its blatant closure of hospitals across the province.

Legislative Assembly will pass the legislation without amendment."

ost. Women's College Hospital's biggest fight has been the fight of the last six months, just to survive.

This bill today preserves some of what Women's College Hospital has been. It preserves an ambulatory centre for women in downtown Toronto with a separate governance and an assurance that the sexual assault centre can continue to be there, where it is so needed and where there is so much yet to do, and the Women's College Hospital people know that better than anyone.

There has been an assurance that Women's College Hospital will continue to exist as an independent public hospital under the Public Hospitals Act. We take on faith the government's assurance that it will continue to be a commitment to provide leadership in women's health, and a majority of members of the board of the new mega-hospital are to be women.

That's all well and good, but there is reason to be sceptical that that mandate will be met when we have a mega-hospital which does not have as its sole mandate women's health. That's why it is absolutely essential that Women's College Hospital continue to exist in some form as an independent public hospital. It is essential that Women's College Hospital not be simply swallowed up by the new mega-hospital, whatever promises have been made about protecting the women's health mandate. It is absolutely essential that the research foundation dedicated to women's health research continue to be independent. None of this, none of the assurances about some continuance of Women's College Hospital, what it has been, what it has meant to women and that the services it has provided to women are going to continue, would be here today without the fight of Women's College Hospital.

We can support this legislation only because it means that Women's College Hospital will survive, that it will not truly close, despite the directives of the Health Services Restructuring Commission. We will not support the government's rampant closures of hospitals. We will support the fights of people in every other community in their fight for their community, and we will continue with the friends of Women's College Hospital to fight to ensure that women's health continues to be a focus for Women's College Hospital and indeed for the governments of this province.

Mrs. Marion Boyd (London Centre): I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak, if even briefly, to this bill. It is indeed a tribute to the strength, the courage, the persistence and, quite frankly, the very clear vision that those supporting Women's College Hospital and the Orthopaedic and Arthritic Hospital have had in the negotiations that have gone on.

My colleague from Fort William has talked about some of the heartbreak that attends today, and that is something that we must recognize. For many people, seeing Women's College change from a freestanding hospital with a long tradition of supporting women's health matters into a part of a huge hospital conglomerate is indeed heart-

breaking. The concerns that have been expressed about the loss of that mission, that vision, have truly been heard, I think, by the people of Canada.

I should tell you that the other day I was at a national conference on breaking the barriers to equitable delivery of health care, a conference on social justice in health care. The minister came to speak and outlined all the grandiose things that had happened in Ontario with restructuring. When she left, a health care provider from another province stood and asked the assembly, "And is Women's College still closing?" Obviously the people out there in the rest of the world understand that Women's College is a world-class facility with a worldwide reputation for the kind of work that it does.

I must congratulate the group that has worked so hard through the negotiations to ensure that heritage is not lost. It is extremely important for us to know the hours and hours of voluntary work that have gone on in supporting the hospital, and the commitment to the ideal that really caused people to sit back and say, "We must negotiate this and get the best that we can to protect the heritage that we have." That was a hard decision to make, and I must say that I believe the negotiations were carried out brilliantly.

I would be remiss if I didn't say something about the Orthopaedic and Arthritic Hospital as well, because it too is a fine institution. It too has a reputation that is known far and wide for the very specialized work that it has done. It is really pleasing to see, as part of the result of the negotiations, that it too will not get entirely lost, that it too will continue to have a presence in our community, that it too will continue to be recognized as an institute within the Sunnybrook conglomerate. That is indeed pleasing.

It is hard for us to accept change, probably harder when we look at our hospitals that we have worked so hard to build and to support. Our hearts get tied up in those facilities and it is very difficult for us to accept change. It is particularly difficult when there is a chance that the mission and the whole purpose of a hospital may get subsumed in a huge hospital conglomerate that looks much more like an industrial corporation than the kind of hospital that we've envisioned.

I must note the efforts of those who have worked so hard to ensure that in the language of this bill it is very clear that this is not an industrial corporation that is being formed by this bill; it is indeed a health care facility that is there with a purpose and a mission that reflects the dreams and aspirations of those who founded and who have continued, largely through very large volunteer efforts over the years, to make sure that those missions continue. It is important for us not to think that the battle is won because of this legislation. The importance of maintaining the programs, the facilities, the focus on women's health and on musculoskeletal health remains. It is going to be extremely important for all of us as citizens who enjoy the excellence and the skill and the programs that have been developed are not lost through this amalgamation.

So we will certainly support the bill tonight.

The Speaker (Hon. Chris Stockwell): Further debate?

and continue on until we're finished the business for the day.

The Speaker: The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to continue sitting. Would it be the same sessional day you're seeking unanimous consent for? It wouldn't be a new sessional day. Is there unanimous consent to continue sitting from 6 o'clock until 12 o'clock?

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): Before you put the question, I think I can perhaps be a bit helpful.

The Speaker: No. We're seeking agreement for unanimous consent. I can't entertain any more debate or motions.

Agreed? No, it's not.

Orders of the day.

RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT, 1998
LOI DE 1998 VISANT À RÉDUIRE
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 25, An Act to reduce red tape by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting two new Acts / Projet de loi 25, Loi visant à réduire les formalités administratives en modifiant ou abrogeant certaines lois et en édictant deux nouvelles lois.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Mr Tsibouchi has moved second reading of Bill 25. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to the standing committee on administration of justice.

It now being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned till 6:30 of the clock today.

*The House adjourned at 1800.
Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

Mrs Marland has moved second reading of Bill 51. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to call third reading of Bill 51 this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is there unanimous consent to call for third reading of Bill 51? Agreed.

SUNNYBROOK AND WOMEN'S
COLLEGE HEALTH SCIENCES
CENTRE ACT, 1998
LOI DE 1998 SUR LE
CENTRE APPELÉ SUNNYBROOK
AND WOMEN'S COLLEGE
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

Mrs Marland, on behalf of Mrs Witmer, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 51, An Act to amalgamate Sunnybrook Hospital and Orthopaedic and Arthritic Hospital and to transfer all assets and liabilities of Women's College Hospital to the amalgamated hospital / Projet de loi 51, Loi fusionnant les hôpitaux nommés Sunnybrook Hospital et Orthopaedic and Arthritic Hospital et transférant l'actif et le passif de l'hôpital nommé Women's College Hospital à l'hôpital issu de la fusion.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to continue sitting between 6 and 6:30

Municipal restructuring

Mrs Ross 1923

Labour legislation

Mr Christopherson 1923

SECOND READINGS

Child Care Supplement Information

Collection Act, 1998, Bill 28,

Mr *Eves*

Mr Baird 1924

Mrs McLeod 1925

Ms Lankin 1930

Agreed to 1936

Red Tape Reduction Act, 1998,

Bill 25, Mr *Tsubouchi*

Agreed to 1942

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

HOUSE

Child Care Supplement Information

Collection Act, 1998, Bill 28,

Mr *Eves*

Mr Baird 1936

Ms Lankin 1936

Mrs McLeod 1937

Report adopted 1939

THIRD READINGS

Child Care Supplement Information

Collection Act, 1998, Bill 28,

Mr *Eves*

Agreed to 1940

SECOND AND THIRD READINGS

Sunnybrook and Women's College

Health Sciences Centre Act, 1998,

Bill 51, Mrs *Wimmer*

Mrs Marland 1940

Mrs McLeod 1940

Mrs Boyd 1941

Agreed to 1942

OTHER BUSINESS

Visitor

The Speaker 1905

Legislative pages

The Speaker 1906

Legislative ushers

The Speaker 1906

Individual members' expenditures

report

The Speaker 1906

Child abuse

Mr McGuinty 1910

Mr Hampton 1910

Ms Bassett 1911

Withdrawal of Bill 29

Mr Wildman 1923

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeudi 25 juin 1998

**AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC
ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

Loi de 1998 modifiant la Loi sur la

protection de l'environnement,

projet de loi 34, M. *Carroll*

Adoptée 1903

Loi de 1998 sur la Semaine de

l'agriculture en Ontario,

projet de loi 37, M. *Bert Johnson*

M. Lalonde 1899

M. Bisson 1900

Adoptée 1903

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 1998 modifiant la Loi sur le

Barreau, projet de loi 53,

M. *Harnick*

Adoptée 1906

Loi de 1998 modifiant la Loi sur

l'assurance-santé, projet de loi 54,

M. *Duncan*

Adoptée 1906

Loi de 1998 sur l'apprentissage et la

reconnaissance professionnelle,

projet de loi 55, M. *David Johnson*

Adoptée 1906

Loi de 1998 sur la Commission des

services du grand Toronto,

projet de loi 56, M. *Leach*

Adoptée 1906

Loi de 1998 modifiant la Loi sur

les permis d'alcool,

projet de loi 57, M. *Tsubouchi*

Adoptée 1907

Loi de 1998 modifiant la Loi sur le

parlémentaire de l'Ontario,

projet de loi 58, M. *Gilchrist*

Adoptée 1907

Loi de 1998 modifiant le Code

de la route (suspensions de

permis), projet de loi 59,

M. *Grimmett*

Adoptée 1907

Loi de 1998 modifiant la Loi de

l'impôt sur le revenu

(indemnités de fonctions

des parlementaires fédéraux),

projet de loi 60, M. *Gilchrist*

Adoptée 1907

VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Loi de 1998 sur la réduction

des impôts des particuliers

et des petites entreprises,

projet de loi 15, M. *Eves*

Adoptée 1911

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 1998 sur la collecte des

renseignements nécessaires à

l'octroi du supplément de revenu

pour les frais de garde d'enfants,

projet de loi 28, M. *Eves*

Adoptée 1936

Loi de 1998 visant à réduire les

formalités administratives,

projet de loi 25, M. *Tsubouchi*

Adoptée 1942

TROISIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 1998 sur la collecte des

renseignements nécessaires à

l'octroi du supplément de revenu

pour les frais de garde d'enfants,

projet de loi 28, M. *Eves*

Adoptée 1940

DEUXIÈME ET TROISIÈME

LECTURE

Loi de 1998 sur le centre appelé

Sunnybrook and Women's College

Health Sciences Centre,

projet de loi 51, M^{re} *Wimmer*

Adoptée 1942

CONTENTS

Thursday 25 June 1998

ORAL QUESTIONS

Air quality
Mr McGuinly.....1912
Mr Sterling.....1912, 1914, 1915
Mr Hampton.....1914
The Speaker.....1915
Ms Churley.....1915
Tuition fees
Mr McGuinly.....1913
Mr David Johnson.....1913
Ontario Hydro
Mr Hampton.....1916
Mr Wilson.....1916
Municipal restructuring
Mr Phillips.....1917
Mr Leach.....1917
Hospital restructuring
Mrs Boyd.....1918
Mrs Wilmer.....1918
Hospital funding
Mrs Munro.....1918
Mrs Wilmer.....1918
Rural and northern health services
Mr Conway.....1919
Mrs Wilmer.....1919, 1920
Mr Michael Brown.....1920
Highway construction
Mr Wildman.....1919
Mr Hodgson.....1919
Toronto District School Board
Mr Hastings.....1919
Mr David Johnson.....1920

PETITIONS

Linhaven Home for the Aged
Mr Bradley.....1920
Hospital restructuring
Mrs Boyd.....1921
Firearms control
Mr Carroll.....1921
Rent regulation
Mr Curling.....1921
Mr Ruprecht.....1922
Ms Castelli.....1923
Protection for health care workers
Mr Martin.....1921
Chiropractic health services
Mrs Fisher.....1922
Occupational health and safety
Mr Christopherson.....1922

FIRST READINGS

Law Society Amendment Act, 1998,
Bill 53, Mr Harnick
Agreed to.....1906
Health Insurance Amendment Act,
1998, Bill 54, Mr Duncan
Agreed to.....1906
Mr Duncan.....1906
Apprenticeship and Certification Act,
1998, Bill 55, Mr David Johnson
Agreed to.....1906
Mr David Johnson.....1906
Greater Toronto Services Board Act,
1998, Bill 56, Mr Leach
Agreed to.....1906
Mr Leach.....1906
Liquor Licence Amendment Act,
1998, Bill 57, Mr Tsubouchi
Agreed to.....1907
Mr Tsubouchi.....1907
Ontario Heritage Amendment Act,
1998, Bill 58, Mr Gilchrist
Agreed to.....1907
Mr Gilchrist.....1907
Highway Traffic Amendment Act
(Licence Suspensions), 1998,
Bill 59, Mr Grimmer
Agreed to.....1907
Mr Grimmer.....1907
Income Tax Amendment Act
(Expense Allowances of Members
of Parliament and Senators), 1998,
Bill 60, Mr Gilchrist
Agreed to.....1907
Mr Gilchrist.....1907

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

Apprenticeship training
Mr David Johnson.....1908
Mr Caplan.....1909
Mr Lessard.....1909

DEFERRED VOTES

**Tax Cuts for People and for
Small Business Act, 1998,**
Bill 15, Mr Eves
Agreed to.....1911

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Environmental Protection
Amendment Act, 1998,**
Bill 34, Mr Carroll
1887, 1894
Mr Carroll.....1887, 1894
Mr Phillips.....1888
Ms Churley.....1889
Mr Gail.....1890
Mr Wildman.....1891
Mrs Elliott.....1892
Mr Bradley.....1893
Mr Rollins.....1894
Mr Chudleigh.....1894
Agreed to.....1903
Ontario Agriculture Week Act, 1998,
Bill 37, Mr Bert Johnson
1895, 1902
Mr Bert Johnson.....1895, 1902
Mr Conway.....1896
Mr Hampton.....1897
Mr Danford.....1898
Mr Lalonde.....1900
Mr Barrett.....1900
Mr Wildman.....1901
Mrs Fisher.....1901
Agreed to.....1903

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Women's College Hospital
Ms Castelli.....1903
Public accounting licences
Mr Martin.....1903
Hospital restructuring
Mr Jordan.....1904
Special Olympics
Mr Pallen.....1904
Toronto Fiesta
Mr Sliipo.....1904
Education funding
Mr Tascona.....1904
Northern health services
Mr Gravelle.....1905
Pay equity
Mrs Boyd.....1905
Waterfront Festival and Folklorama
Mr Rollins.....1905

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

**Standing committee on regulations
and private bills**
Mr Barrett.....1906
Report adopted.....1906



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Thursday 25 June 1998

Jeudi 25 juin 1998



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
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ASSEMBLÉE LEGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 25 juin 1998

Thursday 25 June 1998

The House met at 1829.

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed, please rise and be recognized.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles
Boy, Marion
Christopher, David
Lessard, Wayne
Marchese, Rosano
Marle, Shelley
Martin, Tony
Slip, Tony
Wood, Len
Willman, Bud

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 60; the nays are 10.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the bill carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 24, the bill is ordered referred to the standing committee on resources development.

NORTHERN SERVICES IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES SERVICES PUBLICS DANS LE NORD DE L'ONTARIO

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 12, An Act to provide choice and flexibility to Northern Residents in the establishment of service delivery mechanisms that recognize the unique circumstances of Northern Ontario and to allow increased efficiency and accountability in Area-wide Service Delivery / Projet de loi 12, Loi visant à offrir aux résidents du Nord plus de choix et de souplesse dans la mise en place de mécanismes de prestation des services qui tiennent compte de la situation unique du Nord de l'Ontario et à permettre l'accroissement de l'efficacité et de la responsabilité en ce qui concerne la prestation des services à l'échelle régionale.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Chudleigh): Debate?

The member for Algoma-Manitoulin has the floor and he doesn't wish it. Further debate?

Mr Hodgson has moved second reading of Bill 12. Is it the pleasure of the House this motion carry?

All those in favour, signify by saying "aye."

All those opposed, by "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

The motion is carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I would like to refer this to the general government committee.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENERGY COMPETITION ACT, 1998 LOI DE 1998 SUR LA CONCURRENCE DANS LE SECTEUR DE L'ÉNERGIE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 35, An Act to create jobs and protect consumers by promoting low-cost energy through competition, to protect the environment, to provide for pensions and to make related amendments to certain Acts /

Projet de loi 35, Loi visant à créer des emplois et à protéger les consommateurs en favorisant le bas prix de l'énergie au moyen de la concurrence, protégeant l'environnement, traitant de pensions et apportant des modifications connexes à certaines lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Chudleigh): This is a time-allocated bill and I'm now required to put the question.

Mr Wilson has asked for second reading of Bill 35. Is it the pleasure of the House that the bill carry?

All those in favour?

All those opposed?

I believe the ayes have it.

Would you call in the members please; this will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1830 to 1835.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recognized.

Ayes

Amott, Ted
Barrett, Toby
Beaulieu, Marcel
Brown, Jim
Brown, Michael A.
Carr, Gary
Carroll, Jack
Castelli, Annamaria
Clement, Tony
Clement, Tony
Conway, Sean G.
Cunningham, Dianne
Doyle, Ed
Duncan, Dwight
Elliott, Brenda
Fisher, Barbara
Flaherty, Jim
Ford, Douglas B.
Fox, Gary
Froese, Tom
Gail, Doug
Galt, Doug
Gilchrist, Steve
Guzzo, Gary J.
Hardeman, Ernie
Hastings, John
Jackson, Cameron
John, Helen
Johnson, Bert
Jordan, W. Leo
Kells, Morley
Kies, Frank
Leach, Al
Leadson, Gary L.
Martand, Margaret
Martinik, David
Maves, Bart
McLean, Allan K.
Munro, Julia
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Parker, John L.
Phillips, Gerry
Rollins, E. J. Douglas
Runciman, Robert W.
Shea, Derwyn
Sheehan, Frank
Skarica, Toni
Smith, Bruce
Snobelen, John
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tilson, David
Tsudouchi, David H.
Turnbull, David
Vankoughnet, Bill
Willemeuve, Noble
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Wood, Bob
Young, Terence H.

The Acting Speaker: To the general government

committee? Agreed? Agreed.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT

(COMMUNITY SAFETY ZONES), 1998

LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT

LE CODE DE LA ROUTE

EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES ZONES

DE SÉCURITÉ COMMUNAUTAIRES

Mr Flaherty moved second reading of the following

Bill:

Bill 26, An Act to promote public safety through the creation of community safety zones / Projet de loi 26, Loi visant à favoriser la sécurité publique par la création de zones de sécurité communautaires.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour, Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): I rise

today to ask the honourable members to pass Bill 26, An Act to promote public safety through the creation of community safety zones. My remarks will be brief, and the

remarks on this side of the House with respect to this debate on second reading will be brief because I am

hopeful and optimistic that we will have a cooperative effort by both opposition parties so that this legislation can

pass and we can have the community safety zones in place by the school year commencing in September.

The bill would amend the Highway Traffic Act to enable municipalities to establish community safety zones

and to double the fines for committing certain offences within those zones. The safety of our communities, and

particularly of our children, is of paramount importance to the government of Ontario. In fact, the Mike Harris

government has demonstrated our commitment to personal and community safety on many occasions and the bill we

are now considering is one more example of that commitment in action.

For example, this government passed the Community Safety Act in response to recommendations of the

coroner's inquest into the murder of a young person who was killed by a convicted pedophile. Christopher's law, as

we call it, allows the police to release the names of dangerous offenders to the public and it closes the loop-

hole that had helped lawbreakers to hide their criminal histories simply by changing their names.

This government has invested \$30 million in science and technology, such as DNA testing, to better fight

crime, especially serial predators. This government has invested \$150 million to add up to 1,000 new police

officers to the front lines in our communities, to hire 115 OPP cadets to deal with paperwork so that fully trained

police officers can get back to front-line duties of patrolling our roads and highways.

This government has invested to fight biker gangs involved in crime and to target break-and-enters and

just a few of the initiatives we believe in that we've put into action to protect people's safety in Ontario.

and comments? Further debate?

The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Chudleigh): Questions especially our children.

I urge all members of this Legislative Assembly to support the speedy passage of this bill to establish community safety zones to help protect our communities,

serious about protecting the people of Ontario.

This year's Ontario budget, shows that this government is committed to community safety initiatives announced in this year's Ontario budget, following as it does the \$150-million

King's highways as community safety zones.

This measure, following as it does the \$150-million King's highways as community safety zones, will provide

municipalities with another tool to help make our communities safer, especially for children. The amendments

The community safety zones initiative will provide health and safety of residents.

pass bylaws and initiate measures related to ensuring the participating municipal councils, which have the authority to

designating community safety zones will rest with the participating municipalities. The responsibility for identifying and

make decisions with respect to establishing community safety zones. The responsibility for identifying and

school board, parents and other interested groups as they make decisions with respect to establishing community

knowledge and expertise of their local police service, the determine exact locations of the community safety zones.

Municipal councils will be encouraged to draw on the the province would not specify how a municipality will

entering and leaving these special zones. Under this bill promote road signs to let drivers know when they are

At the same time, we recognize the need to have to drive that message home.

Let's face it, why should a person be speeding past a school yard, endangering the safety of all our children?

We should be cracking down on drivers who fail to stop at a stop sign, fail to obey a school crossing sign or won't

yield to a person in a wheelchair. That's what this bill would do. What we have on our streets and highways now

are too many irresponsible drivers who just are not getting the message that unsafe and aggressive driving is not

acceptable and will not be tolerated. I believe this new initiative, which is the first of its kind in Canada, will help

to slow down. The same crossing guard goes on to say: "They're supposed to wait until we're back on the

sidewalk but they never do. It's not just speeding, it's rolling stops and people not paying attention."

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Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): Just speaking to Bill 26, the bill itself has I think some good intentions. We all believe in ensuring that areas near schools are enhanced with safety provisions. That's something that has been a traditional challenge for local schools, local councillors and school and family groups.

As you know, it's becoming even more of a problem lately. At one time a lot of children walked to school, but it's becoming more and more the trend to drop children off at school. In the areas of schools there's even an enhanced awareness about safety issues and the interchange between automobiles and children and so forth; there has to be an unequivocal, heightened safety awareness around schools. That type of attention is something you get support for all over the province, and the safety zones I think are a good first step.

There are some real gaps in this bill, though, in that many schools are also near major intersections. I can tell you intersection after intersection where there would be a high school and an elementary school clustered near an intersection. One of the biggest concerns I have about this bill is that there is no recognition that people all across this province are asking for this government to do something about what is happening at our intersections.

There is an epidemic of red light running where the public is no longer cognizant of or doesn't seem to want to pay any attention to lights. I think it is something the public wants and needs. The public is concerned. As their children cross the street, they're afraid now, and they are saying: "What will the government do? Why won't the government give our municipalities the right to install safety red light cameras that can catch and deter red light runners who are blatantly ignoring lights?"

1850

Children are being endangered daily at intersections as they go to and from school — some of them are even walking their bicycles etc — because there's a rampant disregard for basic red lights. This is happening all over the province in big and small cities. Why that kind of safety initiative wasn't included in this bill is beyond me.

If you talk about danger to children, there are 55,000 collisions a year at intersections in this province. Many of those collisions occur because of the disregard for a basic signal. A police officer said to me, "The most dangerous thing we probably have now is a fresh green light, because an ordinary person anticipates that he or she can go on the green, but you can't take that for granted any more." You have to stop and look both ways and hope to God that someone isn't coming the other way, because people are not respecting basic lights. You can have the safety zones. The problem is that you don't have any control over this bedlam that's happening at our intersections. It is so rampant that people are saying that even when they come to a stop at a red light, they're getting beeped at by people from behind because someone had the audacity to stop at a red light. People are being passed on the red light. They stop on the red and they are being passed left and right because they stopped at a red light.

That's what should be included in this bill. If this government and the minister were serious about doing something about the safety of children especially, they would allow municipalities — the minister talked about something the municipalities want. There are municipalities like Mississauga, Toronto, Ottawa, London and Sudbury that are begging this government for the right to install these cameras and try them to see if they can deter this rampant red light running. The government has sat on its hands for the last couple of years, stalling, deferring, making excuses for why they will not allow the municipalities to install these cameras which will catch the red light runners and issue them a ticket.

They are now running these red lights without any kind of hesitation because they know there are not enough police officers to be at the corners. There have been massive cuts in police budgets across this province. The money they have put back in isn't enough to fill the gaps for the people who have retired. In Toronto alone there are about 1,800 intersections with signals. They can't afford to have police officers at these 1,800 intersections because police officers are also running around on other kinds of calls. They're doing all kinds of work in break-and-enters, in drug prevention, in domestic violence. The police can't be at these intersections. The cameras help the police do their job better, and these cameras work.

They have been in Australia since 1983, in Brisbane, in Sydney, in Melbourne. They have worked, they have saved lives because they act as deterrents. If the police licence plate and issue you a ticket. If this safety zone was really a safety zone, it would include these intersections. You could at least try the cameras at intersections that are near schools.

If they're really interested in what's happening at schools and safety of children, look at what's happening on the main streets of our cities and towns. People are driving more aggressively. They're driving with an almost total disregard for basic courtesy or the basic laws of the road. How bad is it getting? This is a government that claims to be a law-and-order government. It is basically looking the other way as people are breaking the law every minute running red lights in this province. They have done nothing to stop that, and this bill does nothing when it could have done something to prevent this rampant epidemic of red light running which is occurring in all our communities. That is what children and their parents and their grandparents are asking for. They keep saying: "What is it with Mike Harris and the Tories that they won't put in something that's going to stop accidents? What is wrong with them? Why won't they try these cameras?"

They work in London, England. I had the pleasure last week of speaking to the Honourable Lord Jeffrey Archer, who is a former Conservative member of Thatcher's government and a famous author. He even autographed his latest book, *The Eleventh Commandment*. He's a very intelligent, astute individual. I asked Lord Jeffrey Archer: "Lord, what do you think of these Tories here in Ontario?"

They won't support the installation of safety cameras at these intersections." He couldn't believe it. He said in London they use them and they work. He's going to be running for mayor of greater London in the year 2000. He said that he is advocating the increased use of cameras to make London's roads safer. Here we have a Thatcherite like Lord Jeffrey Archer who advised Major and Maggie Thatcher, who is an astute individual, has been all over the world, and says, "What's wrong with you people in Ontario that you won't use this basic safety device?" Lord Jeffrey Archer, an adviser to Margaret Thatcher, couldn't believe that in Ontario this government is blocking a safety device like this camera. It's got nothing to do with politics, he said; it's got to do with safety.

He said, "What rationale does the government in power here give for blocking these cameras?" I told him the first excuse was about privacy, "Oh, we don't want to interfere with people's privacy." That argument doesn't hold water. In the safety zones we're interested primarily in protecting the lives of children, pedestrians and motorists, so when it comes to privacy, you can have privacy but you also have responsibility. We have cameras. If you go shopping in the shopping malls now, they have cameras; if you go to the bank machine, they have cameras. I think we have cameras in here. Anywhere you go in this legislative precinct, there are cameras. Yet the Tories say, "We don't want cameras in the streets to protect people from being killed." Put the cameras at the intersections, because in this case, if someone is breaking the law, running a red light, injuring people, they should be subject to penalties under the law. That was one excuse this government used, "It's about privacy."

Then they used another excuse. They said: "This thing is a cash grab. You put the cameras in and they'll collect all this money." It so happens this government also uses camera technology to grab cash on the 407. It grabs hundreds of thousands of dollars a day on the 407, because on the 407, if you don't have a transponder, they take a picture of your licence plate and you get a bill in the mail. So here's a government that says, "Oh no, we don't believe in this camera technology because it's a cash grab," but as we stand here talking, they are using this camera technology on the 407, grabbing money from people who use the highway. Why then not use this camera technology to help save lives and stop these ridiculous epidemics of red light running that are happening all over our province at these intersections?

The cost of this: Safety saves money. It's not only good in terms of protecting your little ones or the general population; it saves money because you don't have to have those hospital bills, God forbid, you don't have to have all the insurance and go to those garages, and the tow truck. The average accident at an intersection where a car runs a red light costs you about \$15,000 to \$20,000. We can avoid a lot of those accidents if people drive more carefully. Right now they don't care because there's nobody at the intersections to catch them. They know there aren't enough policemen there, so they run them at will. All over this province, as we stand here, there's somebody

right now.

The province, with its legislative powers, has the ability to do something about it. That's what's so maddening. They say it costs too much to do. Well, let the red light runners pay for the camera technology. Let them pay for it through their fines. If they get a couple of fines in the mail, they'll think twice or hopefully not do it again. But these people just know they don't get caught. There's nobody there who's going to catch them. I got a letter from a lady yesterday. She got hit at an intersection in the east end of Toronto. Her car was totalled. The police officer showed up and she said to the police officer, "This guy ran the red light and hit me." The police officer said: "Sorry, I wasn't here to witness it. There are no witnesses. Sorry, ma'am. I know your car is totalled. He could have run the red light. Too bad." So

What's happening is that as this thing continues to

grow, it becomes a pattern, it becomes a norm, and it gets worse and worse. That's what's been happening. Ten, 15, 20 years ago people in cities used to actually stop at the amber lights, at the orange lights; they used to slow down and stop at those. Now it's gotten to the point where the amber light just means, "Put your foot on the accelerator and go." You know what someone said to me the other day? At red lights now they beep and go through. This is what we're getting to.

It's not to say that this is just them. We all get caught up in this, because it rubs off. It becomes part of what they call road rage, where people are getting more nervous, more anxious, more hostile in their automobiles. We all can suffer that form of road rage because it is something that grows, and it grows to the point where it becomes an epidemic. That's what we're facing here in this province right now.

running a red light — in London or Sarnia or Markham.

1900

They're running red lights as we speak and this government refuses to act. It refuses to do its job to protect public safety. When the minister announced he was going to come up with a safety bill to do with safety zones, I thought, here we go, they've finally come to their senses and are going to do something proactive for safety.

here's a woman who was visiting from another city, rammed, T-boned at the intersection, car totalled, and the cop could not even give out a ticket — no witnesses: "Just your word, ma'am, against his." The car was written off and she had to go to the hospital and not even a lousy ticket, because there's nobody there to catch this guy running the red light.

It's not to say that everybody who disobeys safety zones or runs red lights is a criminal, but what happens is that when you get into a traffic jam, into congestion — we have wall-to-wall congestion all the way from Windsor to Whitby — we all lose it sometimes. We all make mistakes on the road. We all drive too fast. We all do it. So why can't we all just slow down? That's what these cameras will help us do: to slow down and realize that this road rage gets you nowhere.

Speeding through a school zone, passing a school bus — the member for Essex South was saying the other day that there are cars that pass school buses on both sides when they stop. This is going on because they're in a mad hurry. Whether it's on a small country road or in the city, people are in this manic mission to get — I don't know where they're going, but they're always going somewhere important.

I would also like to say that these cameras can be used perhaps near school zones. Some of the school zones are more dangerous in your neighbourhood or in your riding than other areas. There's always that one school where there are more accidents than others. It could be as a result of the configuration of the road, the fact that the road is a through-road, a variety of reasons. But some of these school zones could possibly use a camera. I'm not saying that is going to solve the problem, but that's the type of thing we should be looking at.

Look at technology to help the police so the people will know someone's going to catch them; that if you do break the law and race through a school zone, pass a school bus, you're going to get caught. You can't do it with impunity. Right now people are saying, "I'm not going to get caught. I can do what I want because my car can do 100 kms" or whatever. They can do it without anybody ever catching them. We have a growing problem with this. This is not a problem that is diminishing. It's not as if there's a solution out there. Sure, we can have more police officers; we'd love to have more police officers. We'd love to have more education about driving. We'd like to do all kinds of things, but none of those things is working. No one has put a stop to this total disregard for school zones, for stop signs, for running lights at intersections. Nothing has slowed this road rage down in this province.

I thought the minister would understand that an integral part of this Bill 26 could have been the installation, and the listening to municipalities, who have said, "Listen, we would like to try these cameras, not at every intersection, just at the high-collision intersections." Every city, every town has one of these intersections where over the years there's been a pattern of accidents, collisions that occur at

these intersections. We all see them. We sometimes have to go through them on a regular basis.

By the way, the Ontario Conference of Traffic Engineers supports traffic calming devices like red light cameras: the engineers, the professionals, people like Les Kellman at the city of Toronto, Doug Floyd, who just retired yesterday, the transportation commissioner. They have asked for these for years. The experts say, "We go to traffic conferences all over the world," and they say, "Why won't you try those in Toronto?"

They're working in Scottsdale, Arizona. The US Secretary of Transportation, Mr. Slater, at the end of April announced an expanded program. This is the United States, the land of the Wild West, where you can carry a gun and a six-pack and do whatever you want. In the United States, Mr. Slater said he thinks the red light camera program is working so well in cities like New York City, San Francisco and Arizona that he wants to expand the safety program all across the United States. This is the US transportation secretary.

As you know, in the United States they're very cognizant of their privacy laws etc. But here they're saying that they're sick and tired of seeing these horrific accidents at intersections. The US transportation secretary is now going with this program to put a stop to red light running, to running lights and endangering life and limb. That's how serious it has gotten there, that even the national government is helping the municipal government. Here, this provincial government — the mayor of Mississauga has pleaded with them. The good mayor of Toronto has pleaded with them. The mayor of London, the mayor of Sudbury, all these mayors have come to Queen's Park saying, "Give us the ability to stop this reckless driving on our roads," and over and over again this government refuses to listen to mayors who are dealing daily with these accidents.

1910

We had the Toronto Police Force out here at Wellesley and Bay with their camera about a month ago. They were here for about a six- to eight-hour period. They were catching one red light runner after another just around the corner from this building, running red lights at Wellesley and Bay. I hope it wasn't any of the limo drivers for the ministers, but they were running red lights right around the corner from here, about 50 metres from here — Bay and Wellesley, rampant red light running. The police couldn't believe it. They said, "These people, in broad daylight, right next to Queen's Park, no respect, are running red lights with impunity," right under our noses. What has to be done? The police chiefs, citizens' groups, safety groups, the traffic experts, the engineers are saying: "Try the technology. Try it. It saves lives in New York City, in London, England, in Virginia. It works there." You can make it so that this technology can be part of a comprehensive program.

This Bill 26, which is an attempt to deal with the concerns about children, doesn't go where it should go. The most pressing safety problem right now in this

province is the disobeying of and disregard for basic traffic signals. That's the most serious traffic problem in this province as we speak. That's why it's incredible that this government, knowing that — there was an Environics poll that showed that 80% of motorists wanted these cameras. The motorists themselves are saying, "Give us the cameras." Even the polls are saying, "Try the cameras. Help us avoid these accidents. Slow things down so we don't have to play Russian roulette at every intersection in this province." But this government keeps on saying, time and time again, "We've got to look at more studies, we've got to look at the privacy issue, we've got to look at the technology."

The technology has been in use in Australia since the early 1980s. They use it effectively. When you put the cameras in, when you put these safety devices in, it almost automatically reduces the rate of red light running by 30%. Who in their right mind would not want to do that? That's what I can't understand. If you've got all this rampant red light running and you know that cameras in Australia and London reduced the red light running by 30%, one third, as soon as you put them in, why wouldn't you do it? How could you rationalize that? How could you tell someone who has been in an accident, "Well, we didn't put in the cameras because" — what? What is the explanation? We have not got an explanation from this government about why they've sat on their hands for the last three years refusing to move on this epidemic of red light running occurring all over this province.

Children tend to be carefree. I've got four kids of my own. I can remember that I got into an argument with a driver who almost ran over — came near to a collision with my daughter, who was walking across the street. The driver started yelling at my daughter, "Why don't you look where you're going?" She was about three or four at the time. The driver had the audacity to get out of the car and yell at my three-year-old daughter, "Why don't you watch where you're going?" Mr. Speaker, you have kids of your own. You know that kids don't always look where they're going. Kids are going to be kids.

Intervention.

Mr. Collier: Grandchildren? Children are going to be children. If the Speaker has six grandchildren, he knows exactly that: We cannot expect our children to always be cognizant of where they are. They may be chasing a ball, they may be going across for a friend. Therefore, we as adults and lawmakers have to protect these kids. When I see a driver blaming it on a kid — and they do it. As you know, when you get into an intersection, sometimes the driver who's at fault will yell at you, sometimes if you stop when you should stop, they'll say, "Why don't you keep going?"

That's why government has an important role to play. It has a critical role to play especially when it comes to children and seniors and traffic. Right now, nothing is being done to meet a demand that's out there, and it's a growing demand. At one time it was quite the norm to have one car per family. We're no longer one or two cars per family. It's not unusual in the 905 and 516 area, up

I see the member for Dovercourt there. He knows. We share a corner which we both live near, at St Clair and Dufferin, where we had a horrific accident two years ago. A red light runner ran through a red light, went up to the streetcar island, hit nine people waiting for a streetcar, unfortunately killing one and injuring a little boy badly — nine people hit by this red light runner. At that corner of St Clair and Dufferin, every minute there's somebody almost running the red, turning illegally. They do it rampantly.

The police and the local councillors have said, "Let us try the red light camera at St Clair and Dufferin." They tried putting up a sign that says, "High-collision intersection."

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doing the right thing if you know something is going on which is hurting people and you tolerate it, because that's what the government is doing, tolerating this disregard for public safety by people who are risking their own lives, their own health and the health of innocent pedestrians, cyclists. Everybody's at risk.

We should not tolerate it, and I hope we get that kind of legislation through before this thing continues to hurt people. We don't need these useless things to happen when we can do something about it. They are something that has no value. Running a red light has no value added. It's nothing but a negative. If we really want a true safety zone, let's put the camera technology into at least the dangerous intersections. As I said, most of the dangerous intersections have a school nearby; a high school, an elementary school or a day care. Why not do the right thing? What is most upsetting about this initiative is that it's missing one big part of a safety program, and that is the installation of these safety cameras which can deter people from running blatan red lights.

I'm not talking about people that get caught on the turns, on an orange light in an intersection. This would just fine people that run red on red. The cameras don't come on until the light turns red, so we're not talking about people who get caught in those turns. We're talking about blatan red on red. It's not people that are caught by accident trying to make that turn and get caught up in a configuration intersection. It's blatan red on red running that should be stopped.

I would like to now pass it over to my colleague from Downsview, who has a lot of safety concerns in her area also.

Ms Annamaria Castrioli (Downsview): I want to commend, first of all, the member for Oakwood for his very eloquent dissertation on this legislation and his concerns about safety in general in our community. Bill 26 is a good bill in principle. I think it goes without saying that we, as parents of children, as children of parents, as grandchildren of grandparents, are concerned about the safety of the members of our community, regardless of who they are. Any measure that can increase their safety is one that all of us should be supporting. But I just want to say at the outset, it's hard to imagine why we would stop short of addressing some of the issues that my colleague from Oakwood has mentioned, and others that have been put before the House, if we truly care about community safety. I think it's obvious what the bill does. It gives municipalities the power to be able to enact special zones, community safety zones, to ensure the safety of children and others in areas that are a problem for safety.

The by-law that is enacted by the city must be very clear. It must specify the hours, the days and the months that the zone is in effect. The zone has to be clearly marked with signs. The effect of that would be that anyone caught violating in those areas would be fined twice as much, and the hope would be that that would be a deterrent. The minimum fines for all driving infractions would be doubled.

section: Be careful." One day a car ran into the pole holding the sign so the sign is gone, the high-collision sign is down. They having nothing there to protect them. The police have said, "Put the camera here," but this government says no. They won't listen to the police.

By the way, that driver who ran the red light and killed a person and injured nine others eventually went to court and the judge fined her \$305. Killing a person, injuring nine people, she got a \$305 fine and is gone, scot-free. The only reason she got caught is that her car got jammed up on the pole on the streetcar island. But these red light runners now are thinking nobody's going to give them tickets; there aren't the police on the corners.

In safety we have to be smarter. We're in a digital world now. We've got digital cameras. We've got digital take pictures of these red light runners? Use this smart technology to find these people and stop them, because maybe if they get that ticket they won't do it the second time; they'll know.

But this government has got its head buried in the sand, full of excuses, full of stalling, refusing to move. I don't think it's all the members of the Conservative caucus. There are a lot of them who support the red light camera initiative. I know the police commissioner is in favour of it. Even the crime commissioner knows in Scarborough they would like to have these cameras. I don't know whether it's the whiz kids or whoever. They don't want this to go ahead. I had members on the other side support it, so it's not your average MPP who's against trying this technology. Someone has got this brainwave that this camera technology is not good politically; or for whatever reason they're not doing it.

If the acting Solicitor General really wanted to do something about safety — because starting today, as you know, children are going to be out of school. They're going to be in the local playgrounds, on the main streets. They're going to be all over the place. It's too bad that as part of this Bill 26 we couldn't have had the installation of red light cameras at the most dangerous intersections where they're needed. That would have been a very fitting thing to do the day school gets out, to make these killer intersections safer.

As I said, you don't have to do it at every one. Do it at whatever you have, the two or three most dangerous, and let them work. They do work. They reduce accidents. They slow people down. They make us all think before we rush through orange lights. We all have to do that. We're all guilty. I'm as guilty as anybody. I see the orange and I think, "Maybe I'd better go." Now I'm beginning to think, "Let's be careful." That's what the camera does. It makes us all think a bit. I don't want to get out of the habit of seeing that orange and you've got to slow down. I think we can all do it with the help of this technology.

I had hoped that the minister would have included this in this bill. It would have been an ideal thing to do, and I hope we do it before school gets back. I hope we do it, because in government you just can't say that you're

I want to take just a little bit of time to talk about some of the concerns around this legislation, good as it is in principle, and focus on some of the things that other have said, not just people in this House, but people who have experience on the outside and who have some very important things to say.

The first I want to quote is the Canada Safety Council. Émile Thérien, who is the president of the Canada Safety Council, heads a non-profit organization whose main focus is traffic safety. Mr. Thérien agrees that the plan has merit but worries that officials will need to spend a lot of time researching which areas will be designated as safety zones. In addition, he worries that you've got to look at the enforcement mechanism. It's no good to have laws that look very good on paper; you also have to make sure that they are practical, that they can be enforced, that there's the manpower to enforce it.

Specifically, we're talking about policing. Will there be the manpower to ensure that the violators in these zones will be ticketed or apprehended and therefore caused to pay? That's a refrain that seems to go through the community in general with respect to this issue. We're accustomed in this Legislature to pieces of legislation that are sometimes no more than a public relations exercise. They look very good, they say all the right things, but ultimately cannot be enforced and are not worth the paper they're written on. That's what we hope will not happen to Bill 26.

This is also repeated by parents, and I refer to a particular parent who is quoted in the Globe and Mail, who is delighted with the initiative but who goes on to express that she is concerned that there won't be enough police available to enforce new zones. We know there have been tremendous cuts in the police budgets and in the Solicitor General's budget, so this is a very real concern that this government has to take into account. We hope, therefore, that part of the announcements that will come with respect to Bill 26 will include some realistic measure for making sure that Bill 26 can be enforced.

1930

That takes me to the Toronto Police Association. These are the people who have to enforce the legislation that we pass here in the House, and they are the people on the ground who know best what some of the perils are. I want to quote the Toronto Police Association's vice-president, Jack Ritchie, who on looking at this legislation said quite clearly: "Strengthening the laws so they are obeyed is always a good idea. But without a commitment by the police services board and the municipalities to hire the necessary police officers to enforce these laws, all of this is for nothing." That's really the fear, that all of this may be for nothing. We will have a wonderful new law on the books but nobody around to make sure that its terms are obeyed and that offenders are made to pay and deterred from offending again.

I would also like to raise the question of why we would open up such a large piece of legislation as the Highway Traffic Act to deal with a narrow little measure of public safety such as the one that is being advanced here in Bill

26, when we know that there are legitimate concerns that have been expressed in this House about public safety and when we know that there have been very concrete measures put before this House with respect to public safety and what can be done to achieve it. I need to refer no further than to the proposal that my colleague the member for Oakwood has put before the House. There is no question that in our neighbourhoods there are very serious intersections where people are at risk. I, for one, come from the area of Downsview, where we have three such intersections where people have been killed, where quite frankly it's dangerous to drive through, and people do it at breakneck speed, in a hurry to get from one place to another. One wonders, when you have such a sensible measure as was proposed by the member for Oakwood, to install red light cameras to detect who is running these red lights and apprehending that individual, why you would choose not to take that measure.

We had a discussion on that legislation brought forward in this House by the member for Oakwood. It was referred to committee, and the committee refused to study the matter further. That's very serious. It's part of the public relations exercise I was talking about before. We pretend we're interested in community safety and then, when we have an opportunity to do something concrete, to do something that will actually save lives, we shy away from it.

This is not a controversial measure for anybody at all who has looked at it. Municipalities are in favour of it. Police have spoken about it. People have had demonstrations throughout the city on this very matter, yet the government persists in ignoring this very worthwhile amendment proposed by the member for Oakwood and chooses instead to open up the Highway Traffic Act to deal with one very tiny area.

I give you again the example of our colleague Mr. Hoy from Essex-Kent. That member introduced, again, a very worthwhile piece of legislation that those individuals who did not stop for flashing lights whenever a school bus was stopped would also be fined and would be punished, again saving lives. That legislation was brought forward because of an experience that Mr. Hoy had in his own constituency of a young boy who was killed precisely because people did not stop when the school bus stopped and when the lights flashed.

The government talks about wanting to create these community safety zones. You had an opportunity with the bill of the member for Oakwood to create additional community safety zones through the establishment of these red light camera areas. Each one of those areas would have been a community safety zone. You chose to ignore it. In the case of the member for Essex-Kent, there are 16,000 buses in Ontario that twice daily take children to and from school. You would be creating 16,000 community safety zones. You chose not to.

It really makes us wonder how serious you are about public safety. This is a good bill, assuming you can enforce it. It would be a far better bill if you could really take seriously the legitimate concerns that have been

brought forward to this House by individuals who truly care about public safety, like the member for Oakwood and the member for Essex-Kent. I entreat the government to look again at this legislation and make sure that you really cover everything that is required to be covered and not just deal with these very serious issues in a piecemeal fashion and only for the purposes of public relations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Rosario Marchese): Questions and comments?

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): It's a pleasure to rise to comment on the comments of the members opposite on Bill 26. With regard to the red lights, I believe that the government has already said it's willing to allow red light

cameras if they can come up with technology that will identify the driver, number one, and satisfy the Information and Privacy Commissioner's concerns, number two. I don't think that's asking too much. We really believe in what the privacy commissioner has to say. I don't think the government is asking too much, so I don't think red light cameras are too far down the line.

I take community safety very seriously and that's why I support Bill 26. My daughter Aynsley is 20 months old and in fact made me this tie for Father's Day recently, which I'm very proud to be wearing tonight.

Applause.

Mr Maves: Thank you very much. Ainsley has a lot of friends in the neighbourhood — the Smith girls, Victoria and Jessica, Alex Rotundo and young Brody McCabe, the very brave police officers in the Niagara region, the Schwartz kids next door, Alissa and young Zachary. We care very much about community safety and I think it's very important, as parents, that we teach safety to our kids, teach them things that we learned when we were young about looking both ways before crossing the road and a variety of other lessons that kids need to know from their parents in order to stay safe on our streets. I think those are vital things.

The government has done some other things in introducing this bill which will increase fines in community safety zones. It is very important to community safety and I think it will go a long way. We also have enhanced community safety with the addition of 1,000 new police officers through the community policing partnership. It's a five-year, \$150-million commitment in which the government will match funds for up to 50% of officers' salaries. These are very important steps for community safety. I'm proud that this government has put forward Bill 26 and I will vote for it tonight.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I want to comment on the remarks made by my colleagues, and in so doing, indicate my support for the bill. I think that the members for Oakwood and Downsview have made plain the views of this caucus in terms of additional measures that the government might take; in fact, my colleague from Oakwood has some specific measures that he has been trying to advance that I think certainly should be advanced by government more speedily than appears to be the case.

I spend a great deal of my life on the highways of Ontario, and I must say, over the last number of years I have been struck by just the growing want of civility both in urban environments and on the thoroughfares of the province. It is truly a sad comment on the lack of good manners, tolerance and courtesy. It's not just on the highways. The American press is reporting about what are now called air rage. The behaviour of, in the main, middle-class folks as they travel the skies of the United States is absolutely appalling. We have developed a society now where tolerance and mutual respect are apparently not values that are held in very high esteem. Certainly the members for Downsview and Oakwood have underscored the importance of ensuring that we have the best possible enforcement and penalties in areas like school zones and hospital areas.

But I want to say particularly to the neo-conservative right that if you think that penalties and such measures at the concluding end of this process are going to solve the problem, I tell you I think you're going to be disappointed. Something more troublesome and something more basic appears to be happening, and that is a very serious measurable decline in civility, tolerance and mutual respect, not just on the highways but apparently in the airways as well.

1940

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Member for Dovercourt.

Mr Tony Sillipo (Dovercourt): Speaker, it's interesting to have to address you as Speaker. Usually I refer to you as my friend and colleague from Fort York.

Mr Conway: We call him Rosie.

Mr Sillipo: We call him Rosie even, that's right. I don't call him Rosie, actually, but others do.

I just wanted to say a couple of things. First of all, I do agree with the member for Niagara Falls. He has a very interesting tie. It's actually a very nice tie.

Seriously, I just wanted to briefly commend both the member for Oakwood and the member for Downsview for their very good analysis of the bill and, more importantly, for the things they touched upon that go beyond what's in this bill and that I think strike closer to the heart of how we address issues of safety in our communities.

I, like I suspect everyone else in this House, will certainly support this piece of legislation, but I also want to say that it certainly falls short of what needs to be done to address the problems that exist out there, whether it's safety around our schools or safety in other parts of each of our communities.

The problem is a growing one, but what we see unfortunately in this piece of legislation, as in many other pieces of legislation coming from the Tory government, is the very kind of simplistic approach, picking up on the things that are very superficial and that seem to sort of strike at the heart of what the problem is, providing very simplistic solutions, I think, but yet trying to give the impression that they're fixing the problem. Fixing the problem here is much more complicated than this piece of legislation.

this bill, because it is so consistent with everything else that this government has brought forward.

We have a bill that speaks to some things that all of us respond to, like motherhood, but when you get into it and you begin to analyse it and read it and discover what's in it, it really isn't very much and really doesn't speak to or come anywhere close to rising to the expectation that we all have of a bill that would speak of community safety and caring for each other in that way.

This is so typical of this government: so many bills we've seen over the last three years that have come forward with names and titles that would lead you to believe that there was something good happening here for the people of Ontario, that there was something important that was going down that had depth to it, had breadth to it, had some very intelligent discussion attached to it that we all were part of putting together and talking to and we had our fingerprints all over it, and at the end of the day, because of the process that it was put through by way of this place and all of the traditions we've come to honour over the years, that it would be something that we could all say amen to, that we could all say yes to, this is what we want. But alas, again we find something here that we'll probably all support because it's the only thing we're being given. What else is there? This is all they're bringing forward. This is what they're putting on the table. This is what they've served up. This is what we're confronted with.

At the end of the day, here we are, Thursday night, the last night of this session, perhaps even the last night of this government's reign of power in Ontario —

Interjection

Mr Martin: We could all wish. Wishful thinking is still not against the law in Ontario. It will be soon, though; wishful thinking will be soon. It could happen that we might have an election in the fall of this year.

Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea): It could happen.

Mr Martin: The member for High Park-Swansea is —

The Acting Speaker: Member for Sault Ste Marie, avoid that debate.

Mr Martin: But, Speaker, he's —

The Acting Speaker: He's enticing you, I know.

Mr Martin: He's engaging me. I get so excited. We get up here; night after night we speak. Nobody's listening. Everybody's reading the paper, they're sleeping. Tonight the member for High Park-Swansea is engaged in the debate. I can see. We have eye contact. He's listening to what I have to say.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Sault Ste Marie, always through the Chair.

Mr Martin: Always through the Chair.

Interjection: Give them a little bit of power and see what they do.

Mr Silipo: Did the member for Fort York say that?

Mr Martin: I was just wondering, do I gennulect as well before I speak?

Interjections.

I will support this because it's a little bit of a step in the right direction and so it needs to be supported, but like my colleagues from Oakwood and Downsview, I also believe there are many other things, including the red light cameras, that should be looked at in a very serious way. I particularly commend the member for Oakwood for continuing to raise that issue. I think those and many other measures we need to be considering in a very serious way both here and through the municipal level of government.

The Acting Speaker: Further questions?

Mr Bob Wood (London South): The government appreciates the support of the two members who spoke for the bill. We also appreciate the suggestions that were made, and all of them will be carefully considered.

Mr Collier: I want to certainly thank the member for London South and the member for Dovercourt, who is well aware of the reality of what happens when you don't have a government that listens to people in the area of safety. The member from Pembroke and the member for Downsview, thank you very much for your comments and input. I appreciate that. Also, the tie from Niagara Falls, I love that Niagara Falls tie.

I just want to say clearly again in terms of the government's excuses, the technology is there. The red light camera technology has been there since 1983. If you want to take the picture of the licence plate or the driver, the technology is there. So that excuse doesn't hold water for this government for delaying the red light cameras. The technology has worked for over a decade. It's there and it's getting better. It works. The city of Toronto, as I said, has 40 sites ready to go to implement the technology.

In terms of privacy, the privacy commissioner does not have a problem with this. This is the same government that uses the same type of licensing cameras as they do on the 407, and the privacy commissioner allowed that on the 407. So if he allows it on the 407, he's going to allow it here. The privacy commissioner is not the problem.

The problem is a government that has some very convoluted way of looking at a basic thing like safety. Here we have an opportunity to do something about a very real danger, where people are getting run over and killed, and this government makes excuses and stalls. It is a government that rams through all kinds of bills regularly, without any kind of hesitation. When it comes to a bill like the red light camera bill, which is a safety initiative, it has all the stalling and excuses you can ever find.

Let's stop the stalling and let's listen to people and do something about this red light running at these intersections.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I want to say right off the bat, who could be against community safety? It's like motherhood. We all want our communities to be safe for our children, for our elderly citizens, for anybody who uses them. Walking, riding bicycles, driving cars, we want safety. But therein lies the concern that I have with

Mr Martin: I'm glad because I tell you, Speaker, I was up my feet last night here in this place and there was conversation and talk and heckling going on all over the place, I could hardly think to get my speech out. This place was out of control. Tonight we have a good New Democrat speaker from Fort —

Mrs Marton Boyd (London Centre): No, non-partisan.

Mr Martin: A non-partisan Speaker who knows his business and who's going to make sure that we do the right thing here.

Anyway, I was saying, before I was rudely interrupted — I'm sorry, I apologize, I didn't mean to be rude.

Mrs Boyd: Heckling the Speaker.

Mr Martin: Heckling the Speaker, yes. I know what happens around here when you heckle the Speaker.

I just wanted to say that this bill, like so many other bills, is a meagre offering. We have a problem out there;

we all know that: safety, road rage, people driving too fast, going through red lights. A lot of things that are very

troubling and disconcerting certainly concern all of us. We had some excellent speeches here tonight laying out some

of the very real and personal experiences and concerns of some of the members of this place as we look at the

challenge of people going through red lights and safety in communities.

I suggest to you that this is very narrow and I think I'll

conceived. I think it will prove to be rather ill conceived

and I'll talk to that in a minute, to why I think that might

be the case. It's another of these knee-jerk: "We have to

do something. There's a political problem out there. People want this. Communities are calling for cameras at

corners. We don't want to give them that because ideologically we're opposed to it, or we said in the election we

were not into photo-radar."

It's to heck with intelligence and doing the right thing,

responding to municipalities and communities and giving

them what they say is a further answer to this problem

than what we're being asked to support in this bill, which

because it does go ever so slightly some distance to taking

some action in this direction.

1950

When you look back at what we did as government, it was a step down a road to a more comprehensive and intelligent way, which didn't put the lives of people in

danger by trying to chase people who were driving too

fast. We talked about photo-radar and we put it in place.

We found after a short period of time of having introduced

photo-radar that it did slow people down, that it did lessen

the number of accidents on major highways, particularly

around Toronto.

It gave some level of comfort to some of the police officers who before used to have to get into the old car and chase down the road after these guys and sometimes get into accidents, and sometimes, because of the speed, cause other things to happen. We brought in photo-radar. But this government, for politically expedient reasons, laid out in their Common Sense Revolution that they were

Mr Conway: Make me the offer.

Mr Martin: Any time, Sean, any time you want to get

up. You spoke the other night about how we need to listen

to each other here and explain to each other why it is we

do what we do and where we're going. I want to know why it is, on the one hand, you would vote against

photo-radar, and on the other hand, tonight be calling for

from that. He was right.

Interestingly enough, we hear the Liberals tonight talk-

ing about cameras at corners. They voted against photo-

radar. Some night I'd like to hear one of them get up and

tell us why it is they felt photo-radar was not a good idea.

I am genuinely interested in knowing why you did that.

Find in a moment of weakness, moment of strength in my

one point said when he was being honest — sometimes I

do something so here we are. This is what's presented to

us. No effort to try to analyse a little bit more. No attempt

can't do that. We can't go there." They know they have to

view, people actually tell it like they feel it — that he

though photo-radar was good. He thought it was a good

thing. He thought it was a mistake to have walked away

People will say: "Wow, they are doing something.

They're not just ignoring this." Municipalities raise a hue

and cry and say, "This is what want." They say: "No, we

fully, they think — "politically attractive out there."

some Band-Aid, makeshift things that will be" — hope-

fully, they think — "politically attractive out there."

21.6% out of the income of poor people for ideological,

politically expedient reasons, and we're going to take

"We're going to take photo-radar away for ideological,

we decide we're going to whack those people as well:

part of it anywhere from 7% to 12% unemployment — so

much money those who were poor had, who didn't have a

another moral thing, and they had a problem about how

If they wanted to put one moral thing together with

generated a few dollars.

drivers. It was about safety on the highway, but it also

kill themselves and kill other people chasing speeding

officers another vehicle to use so that they don't have to

about slowing down traffic. It was about giving police

of legislation, knew that's not what it was about. It was

any interest, who spent any time at all analysing that piece

were accused of putting in a cash grab. Anybody who had

The money they were making on photo-radar — we

— was they took out photo-radar.

vince — what a shameful and immoral act to have done

poorest of our citizens in every community across this pro-

after they took 21.6% out of the income of the very

going to do that." One of the first things they did, right

The government went ahead and said, "We're not

major and serious way.

Flags that people responded to in the last election in a

became one of those hot-button issues, one of those red

not sure. They were incensed and angry about this. It

meeting to meeting to make more money — I suppose; I'm

they couldn't travel as fast as they needed to get from

going to withdraw that. I guess some of their friends found

itself now in a situation where we have 20% unemployment. Even the people who still have jobs aren't sure any more whether their job is going to be there a year or two years from now. So you have people out there who are anxious, who are angry, who are preoccupied, and they're booming through the red lights and they're booming through the stoplights, and they're not watching the little three- or four-year-old coming down the sidewalk chasing a ball who runs out on the road. They're not doing that, and that's why we have a problem.

I suggest to you, Speaker — are you still with me? The Acting Speaker: I am with you all the time, member for Sault Ste Marie.

Mr Martin: I suggest to you that there are issues at play here, as the member for Renfrew North referenced a few minutes ago, that are also part of this whole scenario that's unfolding. The answer we are being given here is that we create community safety zones where we raise the fines and charge people more who get caught and that is going to answer this. It's not. It's not even going to go a distance down that road to resolving this problem.

One very real practical consideration, for example, is how do you police it? If you're laying off police officers and at the same time putting into place legislation that's going to call for the monitoring of new community safety zones in communities, and you don't have enough police in place to take care of the laws that are already there and you add some new ones, how are you going to catch these people? Fine them a thousand bucks, fine them a million bucks. It doesn't matter. You can't collect. You can't charge them and you can't collect, so what's the point? I say that, although I don't want anybody to misunderstand here. I'm going to support this legislation, because as I said, it takes us just a slight distance down the road.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): It's motherhood. **Mr Martin:** It's motherhood, yes. It's community safety zones. It's motherhood, exactly, and that's what this government is about. It's about feeding us Pabulum, "Oh, maybe they're not so bad, and they're doing this and they're doing that," not recognizing that at the core of this whole thing we're being hacked and chopped to death.

Mr Wildman: Whacked.

Mr Martin: Whacked, a familiar saying around this place.

Mr Sillipo: It has a certain ring with the Speaker. **The Acting Speaker:** It's quite parliamentary. Continue, member for Sault Ste Marie. The word "whacked" is quite acceptable in this place.

Mr Martin: It's a good word, okay. It's parliamentary. Is the member for High Park-Swansea still with us? **Mr Shear:** Yes. He is listening here, yes.

Mr Shear: Yes. I won't leave you for a minute.

Mr Martin: He wouldn't leave me for a minute.

Mr Shear: I'm all over you like a fly.

Mr Martin: Okay, you're listening.

Interjection: Here comes trouble.

these cameras on street corners so that we can catch with you there that we should be doing that.

But you spoke to another issue tonight that I want to speak to for a few minutes here, and that's the broader question of why it is that we find on our streets today, when travelling hither and to from work and going places, more and more angry people, more and more frustrated people, more and more people who are raging about things, at things, at people. Why is that environment out there? I think you raised a very legitimate and real point, something that eventually this government, if it lasts long enough, is going to have to answer to. We're going to have to have that discussion some day. I suggest to you it's all tied up in a whole lot of the other policies of this government — and they're all connected — that are creating real angst out there among people. People don't know any more much about their future. They don't know if they're going to have a job, and they know that if they have a job, it's not very secure.

A lot of people used to have jobs where they could plan a year or five or 10 years out. God, there were some people in this province at one time who used to be able to imagine retirement 20 or 25 years down the road from the same workplace, and work with their employer around pension and different things like that. That's less and less the case any more. We're moving into a market-driven economy that is interested in nothing but money and the bottom line, particularly for those who are most well off, and the rest of us, well, we just have to deal with it. So we get angry, we get frustrated, we get anxious, and it starts to show itself.

I spoke on other nights in this place about other pieces of legislation, and I spoke about a disease, an uneasiness that is beginning to happen in communities. In my own community of Sault Ste Marie we have 20% unemployment right now. You don't think there are a lot of people driving around Sault Ste Marie a little preoccupied, a lot of people driving around Sault Ste Marie wondering where they're going to go next, wondering, even if they have a job, if their job is next?

I have been talking to the Solicitor General for the last couple of weeks about the Northern Treatment Centre in Sault Ste Marie. Who would ever have thought that would be under attack, the only treatment centre in the province, in northern Ontario, with a native component to it for that community of people to get some assistance? All of a sudden, one day out of the blue we find out that the government is thinking of closing it down, just like they out of the blue decided one day, ideologically driven again, politically expedient — they said they were going to do this in the Common Sense Revolution — that they were going to close down the lottery corporation. Here's a corporation that was making profit hand over fist every year since its inception, including the years since it was moved to Sault Ste Marie, and those people were just thrown out.

Our community, because of that kind of thoughtless action, that decision-making by this government, finds

Mr Martin: Oh, God, we had it good in here, didn't we? Now we have a new Speaker — or the old Speaker back.

Anyway, as I was saying, if we're going to respond to what we see out there as really serious challenges to the safety of communities, we have to be willing to go the distance. We have to be willing to take the time to really study and analyse and understand the problems so that what we put in place will at the end of the day be effective, will answer the real issues, the real questions, the real problems, and not just be sort of a gloss-over, a politically expedient answer to something that needs to be responded to.

The member for Fort York a few minutes ago, in talking to me before I got on my feet, said that there are a number of different things we have to look at, particularly in the larger cities, around the question of community safety and people going through red lights and being angry, things like: Do we have too many stop signs that cause people in between stop signs to rush? Do we do good traffic planning? I don't know. Do we?

Mr Colle: The trouble is the supply. The supply of cars is increasing.

Mr Martin: There's another issue. Should we not be putting more effort and resources and energy into public transit so that fewer people are driving cars? We have too many cars. We're responding to the issue of too many cars inappropriately and there's no long-term planning. There's short-term planning, "Let's put up another stop sign here." I remember in my own neighbourhood back in Sault Ste Marie, they opened up a road. You'll remember, the member for Algoma, that to get into my place you had to come through almost a maze, the pea patch, from McNabb about 100 yards of road, they would have joined up Lake Street from McNabb and got in. So they did that.

Mr Conway: What is this, a works committee meeting in Sault Ste Marie?

Mr Martin: Yes. I'm glad the member for Renfrew North is engaged again. We have another member listen-

ing here.

We opened up that little piece of road and created some more traffic, which caused some of the neighbours to become rather anxious, so they responded by calling city hall and saying: "Listen, we've got a problem up here. We've got all this traffic. They're speeding and creating all kinds of problems for us when we back out on to the road." So the city decided they were going to put up a new stop sign, but they put it right in front of this guy's house. It wasn't on a corner anywhere. They put it right in front of this guy's house. He woke up one day and there's a stop sign and there are cars parked in front of his house.

This is the kind of thinking that's going into this bill here. We have better answers. We have more intelligent answers. We have planners out there who can deal with this in a way that responds to the real issues. We have too many stop signs, I guess, and we want to put them up somewhere. We put a big cement block around the bottom of them —

Mrs Boyd: Supply and demand.

Mr Martin: Supply and demand, that's it.

Mr Wildman: Make the stop signs and they'll be put up.

Mr Martin: Does this kind of thing happen in Renfrew North? I don't know. Possibly it does.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): There are not enough cars there.

Mr Martin: Not enough cars there. Anyway, very real problems. I don't want for a second to diminish the concern of the people on Lake Street as the cars come whipping through. It is a problem if their kids go out on the road and they're not used to it, and there's more traffic and they're going faster, but there's got to be other answers to that kind of thing. I don't suggest for a second that we put those cameras in up on Lake Street in Sault Ste Marie. I don't think people would appreciate that.

Mrs Boyd: Why not?

Mr Martin: I don't know. We should talk to them about it. Maybe they would. I don't want to go on the record here tonight as saying that wouldn't be an appropriate response. I'm saying to this government that you've got to go out and talk to some people and listen to some people. The municipalities told you before you brought in this bill that they wanted the cameras on their corners because they felt this would do the trick, or at least go a further distance in what we're being delivered here tonight by you to do the trick, but you don't want to listen. You don't think they have anything intelligent and useful to offer.

You go into the back room in the Premier's office with the whiz kids and you say: "Holy mackerel, we've got a problem here. All the municipalities out there and the mayors and the councillors are saying we've got to do this. We know in the election, in the Common Sense Revolution, we said we were against photo-radar, and this smacks of the same thing. It smells like it, feels like it, tastes like it and probably is it. People will see it as the same thing." Right, Alvin?

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): Right.

Mr Martin: "We can't do that. So what are we going to do? Oh, I don't know — community safety zones." It sounds like apple pie, it sounds like motherhood. Who wouldn't vote for it? Who wouldn't see it as the absolute right thing to do?

I suggest to you that community safety is a bigger issue than that. It would be above this government and all of us about some of what they're beginning to feel because of the very draconian and difficult and damaging agenda and decisions and policies of this government.

You are creating a situation out there in all of our communities where people are becoming more and more uneasy about their lives, whether they're going to have health care; whether they're going to have education for their children; whether they're going to be able to afford to send their kids, when they're finished high school, to university, because of the spiralling increase in tuition fees; whether they're going to have a job; whether they're

Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber): Tony, you are like a —

Mr Martin: Even Mr Ford's awake tonight and listening.

Mrs Boyd: Don't go there.

Mr Martin: No, don't go there. Okay.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): This is the close, right?

Mr Martin: I'm getting there.

I was just looking up the riding of the member for Dufferin-Peel. I think he was listening tonight. You were listening. So we've got people listening. I think I had something to say that was important. It's what my constituents are telling me about some of the legislation that's coming forward here. I'm hoping you will take it into account as we move forward, as we bring further pieces of legislation forward, or even as we go towards an election perhaps in the fall, that we will get less of this sort of apple pie, motherhood stuff and more work of substance before us to deal with.

We're going to support this bill because it's all that's on the table.

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): We are?

Mr Martin: Yes, I think so. We're going to support it because it's all that's on the table tonight, and I look forward to listening to others speak on it.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Colle: I want to thank the member for Sault Ste Marie for giving us such critical information about Lake Street and the traffic problems on Lake Street in Sault Ste Marie. I hope you can solve that problem with this bill. It may help you.

One of the things he did bring to mind, as this bill deals with safety areas near schools, is that one of the real problems is when parents drop off their children, which they do in their cars more and more. In inner-city areas there isn't a drop-off area and they always have to do it on streets where the parking is limited, where there are cars already parked. So the police are always being asked to come and ticket or supervise. The police can't win and the parents can't win. They're trying to get as close as possible to the school. They don't want to be parked at the end of the street because they don't want to see usually their younger child walk a long distance to the front door. They want to try to get as close as possible to the front door of the school, which is understandable.

One of the things the government might be able to do to help this is to give the schools and the municipalities the wherewithal to allow the building of drop-off areas near or around the schools that are safe, where you don't have to do it in the middle of the street where parking and sight lines are a problem. So along with this creation of a safety zone, what would really help is the creation of a zone where there is a safe drop-off area.

This may not be a problem in Pembroke or where there's a lot of real estate, but it is a problem in older neighbourhoods throughout this province. I hope the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Transportation, who are here, would take that into

going to be able to pay for the house they invested in five or 10 years ago; whether they're going to have a pension when all this is done, because if they're out of work for a short period of time in the new Ontario, they dare not go on social assistance of any sort because then you become labelled as one of those, and as soon as you stick your head out, whack, you get a crack across it with a baseball bat and you're told: "You're bad. Get out there and get another job and don't be lazing around and collecting from the public trough."

They're anxious about that. They know they may not have a job. They know that the job they have has a very limited window of existence under this government, because we don't know what you're going to close down next. You don't seem to understand that when you knock out a good job in a place like Sault Ste Marie or Wawa or London or Windsor that pays a half-decent wage to people, that used to be one of those jobs that everybody wanted because it had some longevity to it, because there was a benefit package, there was a pension at the end of the day, when you take one of those out you also knock out probably anywhere from three to five more jobs in the private sector, because it takes three to five people to service one of those people in the clothing store, at the gas station, in the grocery store, to help them with their licence, to help them with their mail. It's all connected.

You're creating an angst. You're creating a disease in communities today that's causing some of the problem we see showing itself, showing its head in the guise of road rage, of anger, of people driving preoccupied, driving through red lights, driving through stop signs, because they're thinking about what they're going to be doing tomorrow, they're thinking about how they're going to tell their kids that they lost their job, how they're going to tell their kid that he can't go to university or that he can't go to that particular university because it's too expensive and all that kind of thing. You have to put it all together.

Interjection: It's repilian.

Mr Martin: It's repilian.

You have to put it all together and you have to understand it in that context.

It would behoove this government, instead of this makeshift, every day another motherhood piece of legislation, to actually think these things out and help communities work together to resolve some of the problems that we see coming before us more and more each day as this government continues down its road.

That's my offering tonight. Those are my few thoughts on this piece of legislation. I hope those who are listening — the member for High Park-Swansea was with me all night. The member for Fort York, who was in the chair for a bit, was listening attentively. Not only that, he was doing a fabulous job. He kept everybody under control, kept me speaking in the right direction and all that kind of thing. It was good.

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): Bravo. You are fantastic.

Mr Martin: I know.

account, because I think in the long run that's what will really help cut down on accidents.

Mrs Boyd: I always enjoy listening to the member for Sault Ste Marie. I seldom get up to criticize something that has been said by one of my own members, but I will tonight, because the member for Sault Ste Marie made the assumption that if something was a motherhood issue, everyone would be in favour of it. But that's not true, is it? Everybody isn't in favour of motherhood when the mother happens to be a member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. There's only one other woman in the House tonight who's also a mother. One of the things that has happened today has been an attack on the ability of someone who is a mother, who is a member of this Legislature, in terms of being able to keep her children with her and do her job as mother as well as her job as Legislative Assembly member.

I would just say to the member for Sault Ste Marie, I would like to believe that it is true that when we all support something, it's a motherhood issue. But in fact he made a mistake in language, because motherhood is no longer supported by everybody and not for everybody; not when members of this Legislature, who are supposed to be able to be equal, and equal in their ability to represent their constituents, and equal in their ability to be family members, get attacked not only by the press but by other members of this Legislature for their willingness to do a very tough job and also be a very good mother.

I would just say to my friend from Sault Ste Marie, I don't want any more discussion in this House about something being a motherhood issue until we as members all support those members of the Legislature who are mothers and who are also representatives of their constituents. Until that happens, nothing in this House is a motherhood issue. Nothing in this House is going to be supported simply because it's labelled as a motherhood issue.

Mr Bob Wood: I'd like to thank the member for his support of the bill and for his suggestions. All suggestions I would draw to his attention that this is only one part of our overall strategy to improve road safety. I think it will be an effective part, but I hope he'll look at the strategy as a whole, because we're going to continue the 40-year record of reducing accidents. I think this will be a very successful part of doing that.

Mr Conway: I want to commend the member for Sault Ste Marie for a very lively, if at times very idiosyncratic and parochial address. But he made one very telling observation with respect to me and I don't have the time tonight, He rightly observed, and I don't have the time tonight, when he said, "Conway is here tonight supporting this bill and supporting the red light initiative of the member for Oakwood, but he spoke out against photo-radar." That's true. I feel a certain ambivalence on that subject because I see the difficulty.

I want to be fair in saying to my friend from Sault Ste Marie that I was a very harsh critic of photo-radar in large measure because the sense I had in a previous admin-

istration — and it was not the fault of the administration; it was some of the application by police forces — was that the evidence was becoming clear that for too many police officers and police departments, photo-radar had more to do with revenue generation than it did with —

Interjection.

Mr Conway: Well, it did. I remember distinctly about three years ago —

Mrs Boyd: It's going to be worse now.

Mr Conway: I want to respond to a very good point that the member made.

I remember three or four years ago around Christmas somebody from the OPP saying — I think it was in Peterborough — that they were actually going to set the meter at five kilometres above the speed limit. I'm going to tell you, if you did that on most highways, you would fine everybody.

I'm not here arguing that the law isn't the law, but if you've ever been a referee in any game — I've not been a police officer — you've got to use some good judgement. I was opposed to photo-radar, I'm going to tell you, because if under moonlight some midnight on Highway 41 between Kalamand and Denbigh somebody wants to ticket me for five kilometres over the speed limit, then I'm not going to be a very happy camper.

Mane.

Mr Martin: I want to thank the member for Oakwood, the member for London Centre, the member for London South and the member for Renfrew North for taking time to comment and respond to my comments here tonight. It certainly indicates that you were paying attention and listening, which is wonderful. I take the member for London South at his word that what I had to say was worthwhile and that he will consider it —

Mrs Boyd: Send him a one-page fax.

Mr Martin: Send him one-page fax, yes — in his

consideration of all the other issues he suggested that we're going to see coming from this government under the guise of community safety, from the crime commissioners, I dare say.

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The member for Renfrew North I think makes some interesting points about revenue generation. Yes, indeed, photo-radar did generate some revenue, because unfortunately the only way you impose penalties in our society today for infractions against the law is to fine people, and that came with it. I'm just wondering, in listening to him — and perhaps he'll answer tonight or some other time — is he changing his mind on photo-radar? If in fact he discovered in the actual playing out of the photo-radar that we weren't putting these vans in those parts of northern Ontario and rural Ontario where it didn't make any sense for them to be, would he be in favour of photo-radar and is he going to put together the two logical arguments of what he's supporting from his own party in this?

I also wanted to say that the member for London Centre makes probably the most important point in this round

As with any legislation, this bill reflects a balance of interests. There's a little something in it for everyone. Builders get more of the flexibility they need to ensure that they can provide much-needed housing and have a reasonable expectation of profit. Condominium boards get some clarification of their role in a number of key areas and assistance in some of their management areas, and owners get a guarantee of some representation on those boards, a first in Ontario. Also, new consumers receive new and better rules of disclosure.

We believe this bill achieves the necessary balance among competing interests in the condominium community. One thing that everyone agreed on, however, was the need for change. We've said all along that we did not expect everyone to agree with everything that's in this bill but we would seek consensus, and I believe we have arrived at that point.

I would also like to point out how this bill conforms to our government's general approach to business, both its own and in the private sector. The consumer ministry has led the evolution to a new and more mature relationship between the Ontario government and the province's business community. We've done that with the move to self-management for mature industries, we've done it by providing enhanced electronic access to our services and now we've done it by creating a more flexible Condomin-

ium Act. Our reforms to the Condominium Act will have important benefits to the province as a whole. By giving developers and builders more flexibility and freedom, we are helping them to do what they do best, and that's to create jobs and stimulate economic growth, at the same time ensuring better consumer protection. We are also confident that as the number of condominiums in the market grows, that will create more housing at all levels.

In closing, I'd like to thank all members of the House who are participating in this debate. I would also like to express our appreciation to the many stakeholders and interested groups that have provided us with perspective and insight and valuable analysis as we move through this process.

I'd like to just name a few of the groups we've consulted with during this process: the Canadian Condominium Institute; the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario; the Canadian Bar Association of Ontario; the Urban Development Institute; Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association; Ontario Home Builders' Association; Greater Toronto Area Condominium Owners; Markham Association of Condominium Owners. There's a number of others as well.

The result has been a bill that does the job it set out to do for today and the future.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Questions and comments?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I want to take these two minutes just to be on the record as saying I support the general direction this bill is taking and to point out that this is something our former government had

thought about motherhood and the attitude from this government particularly about the question of motherhood in the way she referenced tonight, very specific, and in many other ways.

The Speaker: Further debate? Seeing none, Mr Flaherty has moved second reading of Bill 26. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried. Shall the bill will be ordered for third reading?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Justice committee.

The Speaker: The bill will be referred to the justice committee.

CONDOMINIUM ACT, 1998 LOI DE 1998 SUR LES CONDOMINIUMS

Mr Tsubouchi moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 38, An Act to revise the law relating to condominium corporations, to amend the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act and to make other related amendments / Projet de loi 38, Loi révisant des lois en ce qui concerne les associations condominales, modifiant la Loi sur le régime de garanties des logements neufs de l'Ontario et apportant d'autres modifications connexes.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I'm pleased to explain the government's rationale for its proposed changes to the Condominium Act.

The last time it was amended was in 1979, before the big building boom of the 1980s and certainly before some of the new and creative uses we're seeing today. The market has grown by leaps and bounds, in some cases faster than the legislative framework could keep up. The act became stale and inflexible, no longer reflecting the reality that was there. Developers, owners, property managers and other interested groups were telling us that the time was right now for change. Our government began broad public consultations on the Condominium Act shortly after we were elected.

Under the able stewardship of the then minister Norman Sterling and the parliamentary assistant at the time, who was Jim Flaherty, we embarked upon a round of consultations. We wanted to hear not just the views of industry but of the people who live and work and manage these buildings.

Mr Flaherty and his group quickly realized that the scope of the issue was significantly broader than they had imagined. At the same time, the stakeholders were telling them that they needed more time to give the proposals their due consideration. They were convinced that for the outcome to be effective, the process had to be sound.

We shared these concerns and listened to the input from our stakeholders. We allowed more time for consultation to ensure we had more of it and that what we heard expressed the fullest possible range of views.

worked on very hard under the able leadership of Marilyn Churley, the member for Riverdale — I think the minister was remiss in not commenting on that — and also to say that our caucus supports this legislation.

I want to make one second point. I understand that the government is willing to send this bill to committee for I believe up to two weeks of committee hearings and I find

it somewhat —

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): One week.

Mr Bisson: It's down to one week. But the point I

want to make is that the government has seen fit to send this bill to committee for one week, a bill that all of the parties of the House support that we know tonight is going to get second reading, if not more. But the government is unwilling to bring other bills that are more controversial that I know people want to speak on, such as Bill 31. We saw no committee hearings whatsoever when it came to one of the most regressive attacks on labour we've seen in a long time. When it came to the Election Finances Act, the government refused yet again to go to committee hearings.

On the question of Bill 17 I'm asking the government House leader, through these two minutes, to allow that bill to get to committee hearings in order to give francophones and others in Ontario the ability to talk to that bill and say why they figure it should go forward. The government refuses. The government says: "You know, when it comes to controversial bills, we don't want to hear the public. We're just going to do what we want. We'll use the new rules of the House and we'll allow the new rules to ram the legislation through without giving people any say, limiting debate in the House."

When it comes to a bill that members in the House agree on, they say: "Let's take it out to committee. We all agree on, they say: 'I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm a little bit cynical. I will support this bill and I will encourage those in support to come to committee, but I sure wish you would bring other bills."

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): I just want to go on record too that while I have no problem supporting this legislation, it is interesting that the NDP talk about that they were moving on this and then let their bill die on the order table and nothing was done about it. An important bill like this, an important piece of legislation like this should have had much public discussion. It's unfortunate that we are not having that because it's a good part of housing strategy in Ontario and condominiums play a very important role. But I understand. I understand that they don't want public input. I understand that's why it was introduced so late. I understand the opportunity you had to have more public input into this. I know you're talking about discussing with other people outside, consultation. But I would like to see many of the condominium owners have some more talk on this. I'm sure you'll have your second and third reading by tonight and it'll be completed.

It is long awaited. There is great concern. I have to say I applaud your bringing this forward, because there are

many issues that have never been addressed for years. Condominium owners who had purchased were living in a sort of twilight zone all along, not quite sure where they were going in their possession or ownership of their condominium.

I was extremely encouraged by the fact that you were addressing some of the issues that need so badly to be addressed. But I would have hoped that more discussion would have taken place, that people outside, the public, would have much more say in this. So while I do applaud you and am encouraged by this, I would just hope that there would be more participation and debate on this issue.

The Speaker: Questions and comments? Responses? Hon Mr Tsibouchi: What I wanted to say is that the bill is going to bring a number of issues to light. I thank my colleagues for commenting on this. There are a number of things.

First of all, when you're a consumer buying a condominium unit these days, there's such a thing as a phantom mortgage, which really costs the consumer money for absolutely no reason whatsoever.

There's concern as well, when you have a condominium, in terms of having the ability to assess what the common elements have done prior to the expiry of the new home warranty program. I think that's another important element of consumer protection that's being brought forth in this bill.

I believe we've struck a balance. We've had quite a considerable consultation out there. It was over a period of two years that we consulted with many groups across the province, under the leadership of Minister Sterling and also now Minister Flaherty. I believe we've had a considerable amount of consultation. I see that my colleagues in the NDP are saying there is quite a lot of consultation that has taken place already.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): I want to just add a few comments about Bill 38. Certainly I think this is a bill that many of the condominium owners, the people directly affected by this legislation, are supportive of. They have been asking for this type of legislation from previous governments, and I know they want to see this bill passed because there are some of these specifics they've asked for.

I just have some interesting questions. The member for Kingston and The Islands passed on a note to me that is quite interesting, and I should mention that his neighbour, the member for Frontenac-Akron, is also aware of this. One of his local residents, who lives on Bath Road in Kingston, asked two interesting questions.

First of all, this individual asked whether or not the provision of an arbitration board to settle disputes between owners and the board of directors is in the bill. As he states in his letter, "The government created the act but leaves its implementation to a board of directors who may have no competence or knowledge in management." That's a question raised by this resident. The other thing that he raised was property managers. He hopes these property managers somehow become

certified, with appropriate professional qualifications, because I guess there are some people who like to call themselves property managers and perhaps have no training or no basic knowledge of managing a property. This is raised by this gentlemen from the Kingston area who was just asking as a matter of concern.

In terms of the bill itself, I think if there is one area that the general public has questions about, it is the whole area of disclosure in terms of the financing charges of a unit they buy or a home they buy, what the real charges are. It's part of this advertising that you see — I call it micro-print advertising — where you see "Zero down, zero per week, and you can live free for 20 years," and then at the bottom they've got it in microprint, and when you take out your magnifying glass you find out you have bought something you can't afford and you've got to pay \$100,000 down and you've got to pay for the rest of your life.

I think the advertising of condominium home ownership, and this also goes into straightforward home ownership, is the type of thing the minister should, and I hope he does, monitor a bit more closely. There is just too much of this microprint advertising that takes place in this province, especially in the print media.

It's really difficult for an ordinary consumer who is going to make what may be the biggest investment in his or her life to know what they're buying, and they can't really get a true indication on that from the advertisement. As you know, a lot of people go to places on the advertising, and sometimes they are given the wrong impression. That's not all people who are selling homes or condominiums, but I would say the advertising has to be a lot more legitimate than it is. Right now there's a tendency, as I said, to mislead people by saying always these big zeros or half a per cent, nothing down. I think that's got to be monitored, because when people are buying a condominium, they're buying, as I said, the biggest thing they'll probably ever buy in their lives. They want to make sure they know what they're getting into, and they want to make sure that everything is disclosed, that the total cost of financing is disclosed.

One concern that people have brought forward to me is the condominium fee, that there be full disclosure on that, that it is the real fee, that it isn't subject to escalation that essentially goes literally through the roof soon after they move in. That is one of the protections that the ordinary citizen is asking for, that there isn't the escalation of these condominium fees.

There are concerns about when the building is registered. That's one positive change in this legislation. I think that before, you required that 80% of the units had to be sold before it was registered. That has been reduced to I think about 60%, which is reasonable, because what was happening, especially during the late 1980s and early 1990s, was that people would buy units, and the market collapsed in the early 1990s. They would buy the units and the owner or developer had a very difficult time selling them. Therefore, the building would not get registered, and so people would be living in a bought unit and,

through no fault of their own, there would be no registration on the building. This act does address that concern, which was a common concern, as I said, especially when the real estate market collapsed in 1989.

The whole makeup of the board of directors and how it functions is addressed, and that is something that I think this bill answers some of the stakeholders' concerns about. As you know, condominium home ownership is becoming one of the fastest-growing types of home ownership. When your father first entered the housing market, it was unheard of. Who ever heard of a condominium in Mimico? It never existed. But as you know, in Mimico, in Long Branch, in New Toronto, I'm sure even in Sault Ste Marie there are condominiums everywhere. It's part of everyday home ownership, and it has got to be transparent, it has got to be made understandable and it has got to be something that the ordinary consumer can feel comfortable with without having to spend a lot of money on lawyers, because as you know, lawyers, God bless them, love getting into everything. No offence to my colleague from Downsview, but we hope it doesn't become a situation where lawyers are there — we want them there, but only maybe for a small retainer. We don't want to make our laws too complicated so that you have to pay for lawyers by the hour, by the day, by the week. Just a moderate intervention on behalf of lawyers would suffice. I hope this bill minimizes that.

2040

I don't want to cut back on hours of work for lawyers, but we want to have laws that at least make it possible for an ordinary consumer to understand, read and decipher what the law means. I think this is an attempt to do that, because it is very complex in terms of an ordinary person trying to understand home ownership, and then getting the hope that is addressed.

By the way, the change is not 60%; it's when 66 2/3% are sold that there is the ability to register the building. These condominiums are popping up everywhere. I know certainly in the megacity of Toronto, every time you turn around there's a condominium going up.

The one thing I don't like is that we don't see any rentals. This government has been promising rental units going up, and there is no rental construction still. Now that they've taken rent control off, I think a lot of ordinary people who may not be able to afford a condominium or a so-called regular little bungalow in Mimico will not have the ability to keep their rental apartment. They're worried because now if you move out of a rental unit in Toronto or in Wawa or in Kitchener, that rent goes through the roof. There are no controls left. As soon as you leave, anything could happen to the rental charge. So I'm not sure whether these people who can't afford rent can afford to buy a condominium. That's the problem. But I do not see any rental construction. It is basically still at zero that I've seen in the greater Toronto area.

We hope the government will somehow get back into the housing business, because there are a lot of people who may not be able to afford condominiums and who

can't afford to pay these high rents which you'll see. The tragedy is that with the new legislation you can also convert to condominiums, and that is another threat. People in the Avenue Road area and the Bathurst Street area who have these older units know that this government has passed a law where conversions are very easy. It's not bad to convert to condos. The problem is, people living in these buildings are usually older people who are on a fixed pension and they don't want to move out and they don't want this threat of conversion hanging over them.

The other thing that's a threat in Toronto especially is the threat of demolition. At one time, demolition was very difficult in Toronto. I remember when the laws were passed back in the early 1980s which made it very difficult to demolish an existing rental building. Now this government has made demolition very easy. The city can't really block a demolition permit, so they can bulldoze a nice little building. I guess the big developers will come and bulldoze a little tiny building in a good little neighbourhood in Toronto and they'll want to put up a 10-story condominium. That is a threat.

There is a lot of uncertainty in the housing market in Toronto. This government has brought forward this bill to try and respond to some of the concerns of the condominium owners, and I think it's a bill that deals with their real questions. Our party is supportive. We're more than willing to see this bill go right through to third reading. Mr. Minister, if you want. If you want to proceed, we will go ahead and have this go-through. I haven't received any concerns from the stakeholders. Unless there's a technically or something, we're willing to let it go through because we know the stakeholders have asked for it.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Bissón: I agree with some of the comments made by the member for Oakwood. One of the things he wanted to speak about and just touched on at the beginning of his comments — I guess he got somewhat distracted — was the issue of how this government, when they have a bill everybody supports, decides they want to bring out the public hearing. They want the bill to go out for everybody to come forward and have something to say about it. They want to do some touchy, feely things. They want people to come and present to the committee about how good the bill is.

It's funny that when the government has bills that are contentious, which is about 90% of the legislation around this House, the government says: "Oh, closure motion. Let's just allow that's democracy. Let's just allow bills to go through the House in, let's say, maybe four days. And we won't allow any committee hearings. We'll put a closure motion in place. We'll cut debate. We'll just let things go right through the House. That way, it's a much more democratic system." I know the member for Oakwood wanted to speak on that at some length, but given that the government wants to get this legislation through, and we support it, he didn't go on about it. If you ask people on the street why people are cynical about politicians, when they look at the actions of the government and see what the government does and how it

plays games with legislation, I think that's a good reason for people feeling cynical. The government speaks a good line when it comes to democracy and saying they really care about consulting with people, but if they were serious about it — I listened to the minister as he got up for his statement. Consultation would mean that you would have a real process, where legislation would go through this House in a way that makes some sense in terms of a democratic institution, and then allow the bill to get out to the public so the people can say: "Yes, we support the legislation, and here are the reasons why," or "No, we don't support the legislation and here are the reasons, and this is what we suggest by way of amendment."

So if I'm a little bit cynical about this government, along with other people, that's one of the reasons. This government talks a good line when it comes to democracy, but I'll tell you, they act like a bunch of dictators. **The Speaker:** That's out of order. You've got to withdraw that.

Mr. Bissón: Withdrawn, Speaker.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I just want to let the member for Oakwood know that, indeed, even in Sault Ste Marie we have condos.

The Speaker: Questions and comments? Response, member for Oakwood.

Mr Wildman: It's on Lake Street, as a matter of fact. **Mr Colle:** Is there one on Lake Street? The whole thing about condominiums is that they're everywhere. Whether you go to Wawa — I don't know if they're in Wawa or not.

Mr Wildman: No, not too many in Wawa.

Mr Bissón: Ask him if they have streetlights in Wawa.

Mr Colle: No, I don't want to go that route. Anyway, they are a fact of life, a growing part of the home ownership that Ontarians want, and this bill deals with that changing world of condominium ownership. Many of these changes people have asked for, the people on the building side and the owners specifically, and they are in need of this update. That's what this is, an updating that has been worked on over the last couple of years, and the bill addresses major concerns. We have not received anything but favourable comments about the changes. As far as we're concerned, we'd like to see this bill go ahead. It's needed.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Martin: I want to join with my colleague from Oakwood in saying that we are also anxious, on this side of the House, to have this bill go through. I think the minister spoke rightly in praise of the process that has gone into bringing us to where we are today re this bill: the consultation, the fact that all the stakeholders, the players were brought together to talk about what could be done to improve the lot of everybody concerned. Compromises were cut. Plans were made and concerns were addressed.

We have in front of us tonight a piece of legislation that, yes, has taken quite some time to work its way through this House. When we were government, we dealt

with it. The member for Riverdale did a tremendous amount of work on this act with the various stakeholders and players. The previous Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, Mr Sterling, the member from Ottawa, or Carleton, Stittsville —

Mr Wildman: He's the member from Manotick,

actually.

Mr Martin: From Manotick? Okay. Anyway, we all know who we're talking about. They and now the present minister have spent a fair amount of time dealing with this, have had their staff dealing with it. Now we have in front of us what I think is an excellent attempt at some legislation that will take this industry a step further down the road to being fair and equitable and reasonable in terms of the concerns of each of the players.

2050

I remember the morning I went over to the office of the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations to be briefed by the ministry staff and how impressed I was with the information that was given, how it was given and the way the questions that I had to ask were answered. I was left with a very good feeling that this thing was well thought out and that we could probably move rather quickly to making it the order of the day, making it the law of the land where condominiums are concerned.

I know at that point I did ask for a couple of hours of hearings on this, because I thought, given the normal process of this place — first reading, second reading, out for some hearings and then back into the House for third reading and then on — it seemed to me that this government, in its haste to pass legislation, particularly legislation that is unpopular or has in it some land mines they would rather other people not see, rammed things through. We don't appreciate that on this side of the House.

But this is not such a piece of legislation. We're happy with this piece of legislation. Since we weren't able to get an afternoon of hearings, two or three hours, so that people out there who wanted to come forward could speak to this, I was surprised to hear that we were entertaining the possibility of taking this out over the summer months. I would prefer that we deal with this as expeditiously as is absolutely possible.

I have not, as the member for Oakwood has suggested tonight, heard from anybody in my office who has any concerns about this act. I've certainly had phone calls from those people who support it, those people who were involved in the discussion, and they were certainly in praise of it and wanted to see it enacted so they could get on with the business of developing the condominium world we're supporting this tonight, and we're hoping the government will move to making it the law of the land as expeditiously as possible.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Bission: To the member for Sault Ste Marie, again I come back to the same point. The member raises the issue well. He has praised the government in regard to the consultation on this particular bill. It doesn't happen very often, but on this bill they've done a fairly good job of

we don't have that problem here.

That's why, if you look at a bill like this, which the general public may think is innocuous, it is important to have these protections in place so that people who do buy

in Ontario we don't have that. Over the years, in previous governments, we've had a very strong building code. So the recommendations is to change the building code. But upgrades because they weren't built to code. I think one of thousands, if not millions, of dollars in retrofits and condominium owners in the lower mainland hundreds of had horrendous problems with leakage. It's costing the they put up those condominiums so quickly that they've in Vancouver, especially in the lower mainland, is that headed by former Premier Barrett there. What happened problem. I think they still have the leaky condo task force

In British Columbia, they've had a horrendous much stricter and much more protective than it is in

have here in Ontario, luckily, because our building code is summer. As you know, it's one of the concerns we don't Marie for his comments. He talked about protecting con-

Mr Colle: I want to thank the member for Sault Ste Marie for his comments. He talked about protecting con-

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

comes to contentious bills? I wonder.

says they don't want to hear from the public when it where there is contention? Could it be that the government are so intent on sending this to committee but not bills the community who's really complaining, why is it they both of the opposition parties are saying this is a good bill, I'm feeling somewhat cynical on this particular bill. what is a contentious issue.

bill, and the government will not allow public hearings on the House, with no debate hardly. It is quite a contentious motion," and, let's say, in four days the bill goes through leader comes in and says, "Here is a time allocation House pass a time allocation motion." The government House going to have any committee hearings. We're going to Finance Act, Bill 30, the government says: "We're not supported by the general public, such as changes to the labour act, Bill 31, such as changes to the Election every body agrees on? When we have bills that are not government is going to send to committee are bills that that the only bills the Mike Harris Conservative government, when it comes to committee hearings, says "Let's take this to committee."

It brings us back to the point: Why is it that this Queen's Park office when it comes to people saying, agree that this is a good bill. The member says there have sending this bill off to committee. I think most people the member asked why the government is so intent on

Mr Bission: Marilyn Churley.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): Marilyn Churley.

and who I'm sure will be nominated.

Riverdale, who is out at her nomination meeting tonight done by the former NDP government, by the member for

consulting with the community when it comes to this

sometimes not defined at all. I can tell you, as someone who has both owned and lived in a condominium and practised in that area, it's quite fascinating to look at the problems that have been plaguing condominium corporations since their inception. They include everything from initial disclosure to purchasers and definition of common elements and ownership of and damage to common elements; the rights of specific condo owners vis-à-vis each other vis-à-vis the corporation vis-à-vis the developer; the rights of the corporations in that same instance; occupancy fees; and the list goes on and on. There have been constant calls for change over that period. From everyone from owners to practitioners, and the only thing we've had since then is litigation in the courts and, as my friend from Oakwood has pointed out, some substantial legal fees that have been paid.

The major provisions in the bill, therefore, are welcome. The industry wants clarity and stability. All the stakeholders require that for peaceful living. Members know quite well what some of the provisions of this legislation are. It's safe to say that they provide a fair amount of clarity and a fair amount of security for individual owners and for everyone involved in the system.

It's particularly scary from the point of view of an individual owner coming into a condominium corporation. You are truly at the mercy of the person you've purchased from, which can be a developer or can be a previous owner. The disclosure requirements really are fundamental to the bargain the individual makes. It isn't always possible to get full disclosure under current legislation, and even if you do get full disclosure, it's sometimes difficult to insist on your rights under the current legislation.

What is in here in terms of improving the quality of disclosure to purchasers; in terms of clarifying the rights and responsibilities within a condo corporation; in terms of the increased protection for investments by consumers; ensuring that the quality of existing new condo structures is high; new and diversified forms of housing options which are formed here — there are four different options for condos here that have been asked for for a long time; common elements condo corporations, phased condo corporations, vacant land condo corps and leasehold condo corporations. These are all new forms that need to be sanctioned by law to make the industry more marketable and safer for everyone.

Other things in here include the right of the purchaser to pay the full price for a unit to eliminate phantom mortgages — a huge problem in the industry for anyone who has been involved in condominiums at all; and the right of purchasers to be represented on a condominium board while the developer is still in control of the project, which sometimes can take quite a long time before the developer is actually out of the project. The lien priority for arrears of common expenses granted to commercial and industrial and communities is extremely important, as well as the requirements for post-construction audits and safeguards and maintenance through mandatory reserve funds are all extremely important.

their homes aren't subject to poor workmanship. Once you get in there, it's not just your own little apartment that you're worried about. If something happens to the roof or the garage or the amenities of the building, you're liable. So it's critical that the whole building be constructed properly, with safeguards, and that the board of management can ensure that before they take over ownership there is that audit of the building and those safeguards are in place to ensure that you don't end up buying a building that's got these faults in it when you take it over as the owners of the building.

The Speaker: Response?

Mr Martin: I really don't have a whole lot more to add. I want to thank the members who took time to respond. I would just encourage and urge the government, since the stakeholders in this are out there waiting for the enactment of this bill, to move expeditiously.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Annamarie Castelli (Downsview): I just want to take a few moments to put this act in context. The Condominium Act was first introduced in 1967. It might interest members to know that condominiums were just being built at the time, and in fact the legislation that was designed had no real appreciation of the problems that would be encountered by condominium owners and developers as time went on. The last amendments to the legislation were in 1979, so you can see that some 20 years have elapsed, and the industry certainly has changed. There was an attempt in 1990, when our party introduced some draft legislation, which had some consultation, but, as you will remember, the election of that year put those plans on hold. Then the NDP, in 1992, introduced Bill 81, and it languished on the government agenda and was never passed, contrary to what has been said earlier in the House.

Bill 38 was introduced in draft form in 1996. In marked contrast to what this government has done in previous legislation, it actually sent it out for consultation. It received some 200 submissions, which included everyone from individual owners to developers to condominium corporations to property managers to lawyers to bankers to anybody who had any kind of stake in the condominium industry. I think the issue has had a fair hearing. What has happened in the last 30 years, and more specifically in the last 20 years since we've had any major amendments to the condominium legislation, is that the industry has boomed. If you look at the statistics, most recently you will find that we now have some 36,000 condominium corporations registered with the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Affairs, with some 288,000 residential units and 13,000 commercial units. So there's a real need to address the current reality and what has transpired in the last 20 years.

2100

It's also of interest that during that period of time, from 1967 to the present, there has been a veritable boom as well of condominium litigation. That condominium litigation has arisen because of the ambiguities in the legislation, because the terms are not only well defined but

But let me raise a couple of issues that I think one should emphasize, as good as this bill is in its current form. The member for Oakwood has alluded to one: the role of property managers, the qualifications of property managers, how they perform their jobs. These issues are quite important to ordinary consumers, and at the moment there is no way to address those issues. Sometimes you have very good property managers and sometimes you don't, and I don't think consumers should have to take a gamble on that when they buy a condominium. They should have some certainty that the people who are going to be managing the property are qualified to do the job.

The issue of disclosure of material facts and occupancy fees remains a central one that needs to be constantly emphasized. I can cite numerous cases of people in my riding who have come to my office to complain precisely about the issue of disclosure.

The act as currently proposed still needs to work on the notion of adequate notice to owners when repairs are in order. There are some good things in the act with respect to that. It allows for individual repairs to be done where, for instance, you have to bring property up to code, without going through hoops as you used to have to in the old legislation, where you had to prove "substantial change," which was not defined, and you most often had to have a legal opinion to be able to do that, which was difficult and expensive.

I caution the minister and the government in this legislation not to go too far the other way. You want to be careful to strike the right balance. You want the condominium corporation to be able to do certain things, but also recognizing that you cannot ignore the rights of individual owners. We'll wait and see whether this legislation strikes the right balance, but I would say that at a minimum that's something that should be looked at.

In principle, I endorse this legislation, as indeed I think all of the stakeholders do. The consultation process has been admirable in this particular case. I think all the major issues have been flushed. They need to be monitored for the future, but I am happy to support this piece of legislation.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Bisson: I listened to the member for Downsview speak about this bill. I know she wonders why the government yet again has decided with this bill to go to committee. On a bill that has all-party support, a bill that the government and the two opposition parties say should go forward, the government says: "Hey, we want to consult the people of Ontario. We want to hear what they've got to say about the Condominium Act." I really wonder — I'm past the point of wondering. I've concluded that this government wants this to go to committee because they believe this is probably the only good bill that they've passed in this session and they're so proud of it that they want to run it up the flagpole in Ontario and say to people, "Look at that, we've got a piece of legislation that everybody agrees with."

Why is it, I ask the member for Downsview, that this government doesn't go to committee with bills like the

Interjections.

The Speaker: So ordered. Orders of the day.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): General government committee, Mr Speaker.

reading? No.

The Speaker: Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Mr Martin: Point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to ask for unanimous consent to move to third reading.

The Speaker: Further debate? Seeing none, Mr Tsubouchi has moved second reading of Bill 38. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The Speaker: 2110

raise that issue.

South for his question and the opportunity to be able to taxpayers' money. So I thank the member for Cochrane indeed perverse to send this matter to committee and waste monitoring of the legislation, but beyond that it would be contention. I have pointed out that there has to be some reading and finalize it, because there is absolutely no We on this side of the House have amply said we're prepared to have this bill go forward this evening to third neither by sending this issue to committee.

may I say to the minister that you are accomplishing believes in efficiency and in saving the taxpayers' money, biggest corporations. Frankly, for a government that on this subject from everybody, from individuals to no need for more inquiries. You've had 200 submissions absolutely clear to everybody here in the room that there's minister. Why does this bill go to committee? It is opposition gets a question. I guess my question is to the South for his question. It's not often that a member of the

Ms Castilli: I'm grateful to the member for Cochrane member for Downsview.

The Speaker: Questions and comments? Response, hearings?"

in this session — the government says, "Let's go to public people in committee, yet when bills are agreed on — one I ask the member for Downsview, why does she think talking to the people of Ontario.

half ago, and just jam it through the House without any of their new rules that they introduced some year and a motions into the House, shove legislation through by way committee. No, they see fit to bring time allocation government doesn't want to bring that bill out to another attack on the working people of Ontario, the

With Bill 31, where the government has taken yet "Act?"

read all this stuff in the paper about the Election Finances about. They said, "What is the government up to when we Mississauga today, and when they had the questions and weekend. In fact, I was speaking to a group of people in me to speak about that at functions I was at on the wouldn't say in droves, but a number of people — came to of the two opposition parties, and people in my riding — I Election Finances Act? That bill does not have the support

The Speaker: Order.
Mr Wildman: Let me get this straight: The government says no, it isn't going to let it go to third reading. **The Speaker:** We're in orders of the day. We've got the House leader and he's going to give us an order of the day.

Hon Mr Sterling: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice with respect to Bill 26, An Act to promote public safety through the creation of community safety zones.
The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.
Interjections.

The Speaker: Hold it, hold it, I want to hear this.
Hon Mr Sterling: Such attention.
 I move that Bill 26, An Act to promote public safety through the creation of community safety zones, be discharged from the justice committee and be referred directly to third reading.
The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT
 (COMMUNITY SAFETY ZONES), 1998
 LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT
 LE CODE DE LA ROUTE
 EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES ZONES
 DE SÉCURITÉ COMMUNAUTAIRES

Mr Sterling moved, on behalf of Mr Flaherty, third reading of the following bill:
 Bill 26, An Act to promote public safety through the creation of community safety zones / Projet de loi 26, Loi visant à favoriser la sécurité publique par la création de zones de sécurité communautaires.
The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.
 Be it resolved that this bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.
Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It seems that the House is trying to advance legislation through the House. I would ask yet again for unanimous consent to allow the Condominium Act to go to third reading. We just did it with the other bill.

The Speaker: Agreed? No. Orders of the day. Government House leader.
Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice with respect to Bill 37, An Act to designate a week of recognition of Ontario's Farmers.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.
Hon Mr Sterling: I move that Bill 37, An Act to designate a week of recognition for Ontario's Farmers, be discharged from the committee of the whole House and be referred directly to third reading.
The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed. Orders of the day.
 just pleased that it's proceeding.

Hon Mr Sterling: I seek unanimous consent to call third reading of Bill 37, An Act to designate a week of recognition for Ontario's Farmers.
The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK ACT, 1998
 LOI DE 1998 SUR LA SEMAINE
 DE L'AGRICULTURE EN ONTARIO

Mr Bert Johnson moved third reading of the following bill:
 Bill 37, An Act to designate a week of recognition for Ontario's Farmers / Projet de loi 37, Loi désignant une semaine de reconnaissance envers les agriculteurs de l'Ontario.
Mr Bert Johnson (Perth): Mr Speaker, at this time of night I have no statement. I'm just pleased that this is able to proceed.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Questions and comments?
Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): Being that the member had no speech, I will give no comment.
Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): I want to congratulate my colleague the member for Perth for his fine work in recognizing the farmers of Ontario, the former mayor of Listowel, a fine town where they've got the best cheese in western Ontario.
The Speaker: Questions and comments? Response, member for Perth.

Mr Bert Johnson: My thanks to the members for their brief statements.
The Speaker: This is the first time the response has been longer than the speech, actually. Further debate? Mr Johnson has moved third reading of Bill 37. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.
 Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT
 (LICENCE SUSPENSIONS), 1998
 LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT
 LE CODE DE LA ROUTE
 (SUSPENSIONS DE PERMIS)

Mr Grimmett moved second reading of the following bill:
 Bill 59, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to the suspension of drivers' licences / Projet de loi 59, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les suspensions de permis de conduire.
Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): It being this time of night, I think people know that this is a bill to amend the Highway Traffic Act to allow for the suspension of drivers' licences upon the conviction of a vessel operator with impaired operation of a vessel. I'm

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Questions and comments?

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): Thank you to the member for bringing this forward. I know this is boating season coming up and I think it's a much-needed piece of legislation. I hope the bill goes through quickly. We are supportive of it.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): If he can just clarify "convictions against a vessel."

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [children's issues]): I would really like to just take one moment to congratulate the member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay on his presentation of this bill to this House. It's a very important bill and we all appreciate the intent that he has with this bill. It's an excellent bill for the people of this province.

The Speaker: Questions and comments? Response, member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay.

Mr Grimmerett: Just to clarify, the bill is designed to allow the removal of a driver's licence upon the conviction for impaired operation of a vessel.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Grimmerett has moved second reading of Bill 59. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Mr Grimmerett.

Mr Grimmerett: I move third reading?

Interjections.

The Speaker: Okay. Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Agreed?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, we're going fast, but not that fast.

I believe we have unanimous consent to call orders 41 to 44, together with second reading of Bill Pt-19. I believe we're going to move the Pt bills of private members at this point in time.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

2120

CITY OF KITCHENER ACT, 1998

Mr Skarica, on behalf of Mr Wetlaufer, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pt-15, An Act respecting The Corporation of the City of Kitchener.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Skarica, on behalf of Mr Wetlaufer, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pt-15, An Act respecting The Corporation of the City of Kitchener.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

REDEEMER REFORMED

CHRISTIAN COLLEGE ACT, 1998

Mr Skarica moved second reading of the following bill: Bill Pt-17, An Act respecting Redeemer Reformed Christian College.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Skarica moved third reading of the following bill: Bill Pt-17, An Act respecting Redeemer Reformed Christian College.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Mr Tomi Skarica (Wentworth North): On a point of privilege if I could, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: No, a point of order.

Mr Skarica: The president of Redeemer College is here, along with the staff, and they want to personally, through me, through the Speaker, thank everyone in the House for their cooperation in passing this bill.

The Speaker: That was neither a point of privilege nor order.

EASTERN PENTECOSTAL

BIBLE COLLEGE ACT, 1998

Mr Stewart moved second reading of the following bill: Bill Pt-18, An Act respecting Eastern Pentecostal Bible College.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Stewart moved third reading of the following bill: Bill Pt-18, An Act respecting Eastern Pentecostal Bible College.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

MUNICIPALITY OF

CHATHAM-KENT ACT, 1998

Mr Carroll moved second reading of the following bill: Bill Pt-19, An Act respecting the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Carroll moved third reading of the following bill: Bill Pt-19, An Act respecting the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

The House adjourned at 2133.

The House adjourned at 2133.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic	Hamilton East / -Est	L	parliamentary assistant (Small Business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secleur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Baird, John R.	Napan	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Finances
Bartlett, Toby	Norfolk	PC	
Barolucchi, Rick	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Hon / L'hon Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	
Bisson, Gilles	Cochran South / -Sud	ND	deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Boushy, Dave	Sarnia	PC	
Boyd, Marion	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	deputy opposition leader, opposition House leader / chef adjoint de l'opposition, chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Services correctionnels
Brown, Michael A.	Algonia-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, David	Orillia	L	
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Castro, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	
Chudleigh, Ted	Haltim North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Présidente de la Chambre et Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Collie, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Kentfrw North / -Nord	L	
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	
Cullen, Alex	Ottawa West / -Ouest	L	
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition

Député(e) / Member	Circonscription / Constituency	Parti / Party	Autres responsabilités / Other responsibilities
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peelborough	PC	parliamentary assistant (Agriculture and Food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Defaria, Carl	Mississauga-Est / Est	PC	
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / Est	PC	
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janel	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Elhott, Brenda	Guelph	PC	
Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Fisher, Barbara	Bruce	PC	parliamentary assistant (Rural Affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjointe parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Labour, Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / ministre du Travail, solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Ford, Douglas B.	Eribeoke-Humber	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox-Hastings-Sud	PC	
Frees, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	parliamentary assistant (Colleges and Universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Environnement
Gerritsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	parliamentary assistant (Municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmell, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Croftienne	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Guzzo, Gary J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant (Municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Eribeoke-Rexdale	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines, deputy government House leader / Président du Conseil de gestion, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines, vice-leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre de la Santé
Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Seniors Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Johnson, Hon / L'hon David	Don Mills	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secrétaire Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secrétaire
Jordan, W. Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	Tourisme
Kelly, Morley	Eriebecker-Lakeshore	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Kennedy, Gerard	York South / - Sud	L	
Klces, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	
Korman, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND	
Kwincer, Monic	Willson Heights	L	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott et Russell / Prescott et Russell	L	
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Leach, Hon / L'hon Al	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Lessard, Wayne	Windsor-Riverside	ND	
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND	
Markland, Hon / Hon Margaret	Mississauga South / - Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Children's Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (enfance)
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / - Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Travail
McGuinny, Dalton	Ottawa South / - Sud	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLeod, Lynn	Simcoe East / - Est	PC	
McLennan, Allan K.	Fort William	L	
Michals, Frank	Kenora	L	
Monk, Gilles E.	Carleton East / - Est	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Munn, Julia	Durham-York	PC	Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdock, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire du premier ministre
Mushinski, Marilyn	Scarborough-Eglar	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjointe parlementaire de la ministre de la Santé
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / - Centre	PC	
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / - Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	
Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al	York Centre / - Centre	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Parker, John L.	York East / - Est	PC	parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / - Centre	L	
Pell, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	

Member / Député(e)	Circumscription / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Pouhlot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND
Preson, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Quinte	PC
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC
Runciman, Robert W.	Leeds-Grenville	PC
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdale	L
Sampson, Hon /	Mississauga West / -Ouest	PC
L'hon Rob		PC
Saunderson, William	Eglinton	PC
Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC
		parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC
Snobelen, Hon /	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC
L'hon John		parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC
		Minister of the Environment, government House leader / ministre de l'Environnement, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Stewart, R. Gary	Peterborough	PC
		assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Stockwell, Hon /	Etobicoke West / -Ouest	PC
L'hon Chns		Speaker / Président
Tascona, Joseph N.	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	PC
Tilson, David	Dufferin-Peel	PC
L'hon David H.	Markham	PC
L'hon David		Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Turnbull, Hon /	York Mills	PC
L'hon David		Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement
Vankoughnet, Bill	Frontenac-Addington	PC
Villeneuve, Hon /	S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	PC
L'hon Noble		Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for Francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Wettlafer, Wayne	Kitchener	PC
Wildman, Bud	Algonia	ND
Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim	Simcoe West / -Ouest	PC
		Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Energie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Witmer, Hon /	Waterloo North / -Nord	PC
L'hon Elizabeth		Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Wood, Bob	London South / -Sud	PC
Wood, Len	Cochrane North / -Nord	ND
Young, Terence H.	Haldon Centre / -Centre	PC
		parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Finances
		Nickel Belt
		Vacant

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 Vice-Châir / Vice-Président: Trevor Pettit
 Dominic Agostino, Marcel Beaubien, Douglas B. Ford,
 Sandra Pupatello, Bill Vankoughnet, Len Wood
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 Toby Bartel, Dave Boushy, David Caplan,
 Ernie Hardeman, Gary L. Leadsom, Tony Martin,
 Tony Ruprecht, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan,
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 David Christopherson, Ted Chudleigh, Sean G. Conway,
 Brenda Elliott, Doug Galt, John Hastings, Pat Hoy,
 Bart Maves, Peter L. Preston
 Clerk / Greffier: Donna Bryce

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Châir / Président: Annamarie Castelli
 Vice-Châir / Vice-Président: Dwight Duncan
 Marion Boyd, Jack Carroll, Annamarie Castelli,
 Dwight Duncan, Tim Hudak, Frank Klees,
 Lyn McLeod, Lillian Ross, Bruce Smith
 Clerk / Greffier: Tonia Granum

Administration of justice / Administration de la justice

Châir / Président: Jerry J. Ouellette
 Vice-Châir / Vice-Président: E.J. Douglas Rollins
 Dave Boushy, Bruce Crozier, Peter Kormos,
 Gerry Martiniuk, Jerry J. Ouellette, David Ramsay,
 E.J. Douglas Rollins, R. Gary Stewart, Bob Wood
 Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Amott

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Châir / Président: Gerard Kennedy
 Vice-Châir / Vice-Président: Rick Bartolucci
 Rick Bartolucci, Gilles Bissson, John C. Cleary,
 Ed Doyle, Gerard Kennedy, John L. Parker,
 Trevor Pettit, Wayne Weillauer, Terence H. Young
 Clerk / Greffier: Viktor Kaczkowski

Finance and economic affairs / Finances et affaires économiques

Châir / Président: Gary J. Guzzo
 Vice-Châir / Vice-Président: Wayne Weillauer
 Ted Amott, John R. Baird, Jim Brown, Gary J. Guzzo,
 Monic Kwinter, Gerry Phillips, E.J. Douglas Rollins,
 Tony Silipo, Wayne Weillauer
 Clerk / Greffier: Tonia Granum

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Châir / Président: John R. O'Toole
 Vice-Châir / Vice-Président: Julia Munro
 Mike Colic, Harry Danford, Barbara Fisher,
 Tom Froese, Steve Gilchrist, Wayne Lessard,
 Julia Munro, John R. O'Toole, Mario Sergio
 Clerk / Greffier: Tom Phins

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 Vice-Châir / Vice-Président: Rosario Marchese
 Alex Cullen, Michael Gravelle, Bill Grimeau,
 Bert Johnson, Frances Lankin, Rosario Marchese,
 Jan Newman, Joseph Spina, R. Gary Stewart,
 Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Amott

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Châir / Président: Joseph N. Tascona
 Vice-Châir / Vice-Président: Gary Fox
 Alvin Curling, Carl DeFaria, Gary Fox, Ernie Hardeman,
 Ielen Johns, Allan K. McLean, Gilles E. Morin, Marilyn
 Mushinski, Peter North, Gilles Pouliot, Joseph N. Tascona
 Clerk / Greffier: Peter Sibenik

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears in each space permits.

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.

CONTENTS

Thursday 25 June 1998

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeu'di 25 juin 1998

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 1998 sur la concurrence

dans le secteur de l'énergie,

projet de loi 35, *M. Wilson*

Adoptée..... 1943

Loi de 1998 sur l'amélioration des

services publics dans le Nord

de l'Ontario, projet de loi 12,

M. Hodgson

Adoptée..... 1943

Loi de 1998 modifiant le Code de

la route en ce qui concerne les

zones de sécurité communautaires,

projet de loi 26, *M. Flaherty*

Adoptée..... 1958

Loi de 1998 sur les condominiums,

projet de loi 38, *M. Tsoubouchi*

Adoptée..... 1965

Loi de 1998 modifiant le code de la

route (suspensions de permis),

projet de loi 59, *M. Grinnell*

Adoptée..... 1965

Loi de 1998 sur la Semaine de

l'agriculture en Ontario,

projet de loi 37, *M. Bert Johnson*

Adoptée..... 1965

THIRD READINGS

Highway Traffic Amendment Act

(Community Safety Zones), 1998,

Bill 26, *Mr Flaherty*

Agreed to..... 1965

Ontario Agriculture Week Act, 1998,

Bill 37, *Mr Bert Johnson*

Agreed to..... 1965

City of Kitchener Act, 1998,

Bill Pr15, *Mr Wenlauffer*

Agreed to..... 1966

Redeemer Reformed Christian

College Act, 1998,

Bill Pr17, *Mr Skarica*

Agreed to..... 1966

Mr Skarica..... 1966

Eastern Pentecostal Bible College Act,

1998, Bill Pr18, *Mr Stewart*

Agreed to..... 1966

Municipality of Chatham-Kent Act,

1998, Bill Pr19, *Mr Carroll*

Agreed to..... 1966

Canadian Information Processing

Society of Ontario Act, 1998,

Bill Pr21, *Mr Saunderson*

Agreed to..... 1967

OTHER BUSINESS

Committee sittings

Mr Sterling..... 1967

Mr Wildman..... 1967

Agreed to..... 1967

SECOND READINGS

Energy Competition Act, 1998,

Bill 35, *Mr Wilson*

Agreed to..... 1943

Northern Services Improvement

Act, 1998, Bill 12, *Mr Hodgson*

Agreed to..... 1943

Highway Traffic Amendment Act

(Community Safety Zones), 1998,

Bill 26, *Mr Flaherty*

Agreed to..... 1944

Mr Colle..... 1945, 1952, 1956

Ms Castelli..... 1949

Mr Mavcs..... 1951

Mr Conway..... 1951, 1957

Mr Sillipo..... 1951

Mr Bob Wood..... 1952, 1957

Mr Martin..... 1952, 1957

Mrs Boyd..... 1957

Agreed to..... 1958

Condominium Act, 1998, Bill 38,

Mr Tsoubouchi

Agreed to..... 1958, 1959

Mr Tsoubouchi..... 1958, 1959

Mr Bisson..... 1958

Mr Curling..... 1959

Mr Colle..... 1959, 1961, 1962

Mr Bisson..... 1961, 1962, 1964

Mr Wildman..... 1961

Mr Martin..... 1963, 1964

Ms Castelli..... 1963, 1964

Agreed to..... 1965

Highway Traffic Amendment Act

(Licence Suspensions), 1998,

Bill 59, *Mr Grinnell*

Mr Grinnell..... 1965, 1966

Mr Colle..... 1966

Mr Bisson..... 1966

Mrs Marland..... 1966

Agreed to..... 1966

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Second Session, 36th Parliament

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Monday 28 September 1998

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de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 36^e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Lundi 28 septembre 1998



Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 28 septembre 1998

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 28 September 1998

*The House met at 1:31.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): When homeowners across Ontario received their property tax bill they were very much surprised; unable, in fact, to understand their

We in Toronto, especially, were not just surprised but

hooked at the inability of this government to ensure not only that this tax bill was easy to understand but that the residents and homeowners would be ensured justice and fairness in the tax structure. The Conservatives passed the first tax bill, which was supposed to settle it. Then, of course, we know the second tax bill had to be introduced to fix the first tax bill. Then, of course, the third tax bill had to be introduced to fix the second one and the first

me. In terms of property taxes, chaos was the result. Today the Liberal Party, under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty, has made a very clear indication to the government and that is, let's move on this as quickly as possible and extend the appeal period.

You have agreed to it, even though we know there was confusion even in terms of the appeal period. The Premier got up one time and said, "I'm not quite sure there should be an appeal period."

After public pressure and many demonstrations that not only forced homeowners on to the street but forced small businesses on to the street — there were thousands of them demonstrating on St Clair, on Bloor, on Dovercourt, east and west across the city, and certainly also in other places in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you. You'll notice the clock's counting up, so you've got to a minute 30.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): On September 3, the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences in Ontario released a report entitled Patterns of Health Care in Ontario: Arthritis and Related Conditions. The report is very clear that there is a lack of equity among the arthritis services that are available in Ontario. Areas like the north and southwestern Ontario, for exam-

The report calls upon the Minister of Health to develop a management strategy for arthritis and related diseases. I call on the minister today to take action immediately on this matter. We know that in order to coordinate services to ensure that primary health care professionals are aware of arthritis, we need a concerted effort. This minister should take the lead in ensuring that we have that management strategy in place.

Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South): I am pleased to rise today to honour Ruby Conway, a distinguished Canadian, noted journalist and community leader from Port Colborne in my riding of Niagara South. I am most pleased that Ruby is here with us today, seated in the members' gallery.

As a student at Steele Street school and Port Colborne High School, Ruby's teachers knew that she would contribute to her community in the most extraordinary way. They were right.

As a lifelong resident of Port Colborne, she has worked tirelessly for an impressive number of worthy causes and charities, including the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the sea and air cadets, the Red Cross and the Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum, to name a few.

For over two decades, Ruby has been an important voice in her community. Her award-winning columns in the Port Colborne News and the Welland Tribune have been enjoyed by people of all ages.

She is a woman of abiding passion for local history and heritage. Most recently she was awarded with the Ontario Heritage Foundation achievement award for her dedication to preserving the rich history of our lakeside community. In 1994, she wrote Tales of Tennessee, a vivid account of the social happenings on Tennessee Avenue at the turn of the century.

Even Premier Harris has encountered Ruby's expertise and insight. She recommended, at a Premier's round table at Niagara-on-the-Lake not so long ago, a 24-hour seniors' hotline, which has been taken up in our rural health reform. So she has given us good advice here in the province and we welcome her here today. Thank you very much, Ruby.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): The Mike Harris hospital closing commission is meeting in secret behind closed doors to determine the future of hospitals in the Niagara Peninsula. The commission is poised to swing its notorious axe in the near future despite the promise by Mike Harris during the last provincial election campaign that he had "no plan to close hospitals."

Having already closed or forced the amalgamation of 35 hospitals in Ontario, Mike Harris's commission has its eye on Hotel Dieu, Douglas Memorial, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Port Colborne and West Lincoln Memorial for either closure or drastic alteration in their role.

What Mike Harris and his hand-picked hospital closing commission must be aware of is that Niagara has the largest percentage of senior citizens of any municipality in Ontario and that seniors tend to require more hospital care than others in our communities.

Instead of cutting hospital funding by over \$40 million, the Harris government should be increasing funding for the operation of our hospitals. We need more funding for nurses, facilities, medical and non-medical staff, and the general operation of our hospitals. Let's restore our hospitals in Ontario and in Niagara to their previous excellent state. We require Mike Harris to keep his promise to do so.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Remember when John Snobelen, the then Minister of Education, got caught on video telling Ministry of Education staff how to create a crisis in education in order to set the climate to make changes to the education system to save money? Well, they've created the crisis now and today they will introduce back-to-work legislation for those schools that are out, but we all know that this legislation won't fix the crisis.

Mike Harris could solve the strikes and the lockouts to-day by restoring adequate funding to our education system. We all know they've taken out a billion dollar. But what are they doing instead? They are pitting teachers against boards and claiming absolutely no responsibility for the crisis they admitted to creating.

What else are they doing? This government has spent up to \$1.68 million on education advertising, on education propaganda during the first two weeks of school. That's happening while class sizes are actually getting larger in many schools. There are no longer education assistants and special assistants to help teachers. Teachers have

CRAWFORD SMYTH

More students to teach and less time with each of them. That is the reality of what's going on in our education system today.

We call on the government today to fix the real problem and put the money back.

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): I rise today to pay tribute to a constituent, Mr Crawford Smyth, who passed away July 15 on his 80th birthday after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Last June Mr Smyth was awarded the Ontario Medal of Good Citizenship by the Lieutenant Governor in a special ceremony at his home, a ceremony which I was honoured to attend. Unfortunately he was too ill to attend the investiture ceremony at the Legislative Building.

Mr Smyth served gallantly overseas during World War II, and upon his return devoted his life to community service work. In war he fought to protect the liberties and freedoms that we enjoy today; in peace he fought to assist those less fortunate. In doing so he made Scarborough a better place for all of us.

In 1957, Mr Smyth began a 41-year association with the Canadian Cancer Society. In the years following he held virtually every position in the organization, from canvasser to president. He started the strawberry social contributions that volunteers made to the cancer society. As a member of the Scarborough Kiwanis Club he was instrumental in setting up the Kiwanis Music Festival and their efforts in supporting the Salvation Army's Red Shield Appeal some 25 years ago.

During the celebrations marking the centenary of Canada, Mr Smyth found time to chair both Scarborough's events and also the Ontario Centenary Music Festival. As well, he was a director of the CNE and president of both the Federation of Canadian Music Festivals and the Canadian Bureau for the Advancement of Music. In 1968, then-Mayor Albert Campbell appointed Mr Smyth to the TTC.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you.

1340

NELSON MANDELA

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): On Friday, September 25, over 40,000 students witnessed history in the making. President Nelson Mandela was in town. The SkyDome saw this most impressive figure telling students how important they are to peace and the betterment of our planet. Mandela, the legendary figure, is acclaimed as a world hero, a symbol of hope.

Jim Coyle of the Toronto Star said it so well in his article: "Courage and commitment, dignity and grace, selflessness and endurance. It is possible to empty a dictionary and still not do justice to the man. But children know how," know so well how important it was. We sometimes take for granted how much they know and how sensitive they are and important to our population.

Mandela thanked Canada for being there for South Africa when apartheid was rampant in his country. We in Canada honoured him or in fact he honoured us by receiving the Order of Canada. He also, in his very busy schedule, had a business luncheon and a very impressive dinner that night. Although unable to attend because of exhaustion, he came back and gave a wonderful speech. The children have spoken so well. It was of course unfortunate at times when they did not greet the Premier in the way we thought the office should be respected. However, we want to thank this great man for being such a great hero to us all.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Shortly after the election of the Harris government, the Minister of Education promised he was going to create a crisis in education in this province, and that's one promise they have kept in spades. Just take a look at the actions. It started with Bill 104, when they stripped away any ability for boards to find local solutions to local problems. It was followed by Bill 160 where they changed all of the rules that affected what used to be done in collective bargaining, and that was followed by a funding formula which stripped much-needed dollars out of our classrooms. Take a look at what they've done in the last month. They terminated all collective agreements in the province on August 31, just a handful of days before the kids were due back in school. Then they threatened to legislate. Then they threatened not to legislate. Then they sent a letter to clarify, which interfered in bargaining. Then they said, "Don't pay any attention to our letter." Then they threatened to legislate again. Last Wednesday they said, "We won't legislate until we have an ERC ruling." Thursday they said, "We can't wait any longer." No wonder people put there don't know what's going on. No wonder boards like the Catholic board last night decided to keep those kids out of the classroom and the teachers out on the street, because they're going to wait for the government legislation.

You have created a crisis all right. It's a crisis that's going to affect our kids' education for a long time to come. Your legislation today won't fix a thing.

SPEECH PATHOLOGY

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): Of all the tasks of government, the most basic is to provide children with the tools to learn effectively. Last week I attended the family resource centre in Port Hope to help with their celebration of the preschool speech and language services program for the counties of Victoria, Haliburton, Northumberland and Peterborough. This program, which will benefit some 1,900 children, will help to identify preschool-age children with speech and language delays and difficulties. With the help of a \$357,000 reinvestment from our government, the speech and language working group were

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on administration of justice and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment: Bill 22, An Act to Prevent Unionization with respect to Community Participation under the Ontario Works Act, 1997.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated Thursday, June 4, 1998, the bill is ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I beg leave to inform the House that during the recess the Clerk received the sixth and seventh reports from the standing committee on government agencies.

Pursuant to standing order 105(g)(9), these reports are deemed to be adopted by the House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PROPERTY TAX DEADLINE

EXTENSION ACT, 1998
LOI DE 1998 SUR LE PROLONGEMENT
DE DÉLAIS APPLICABLES
À L'IMPÔT FONCIER

Mr Eves moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 61, An Act to extend the deadlines for appealing property assessments and for giving certain notices

relating to taxes and charges on properties with gross leases / *Projet de loi 61*, *Loi prolongeant les délais prévus pour interjeter appel des évaluations foncières et pour donner certains avis concernant les impôts prélevés et les redevances imposées sur des biens à loyer brut.*

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Any comments, Minister?

(Finance): Of course, I think this is the fair thing to do for people, to give them more time.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Member for Sudbury, come to order, please.

Hon Mr Eves: I assume the opposition will give the same enthusiastic response to the first reading of the bill that the Minister of Education has to introduce.

BACK TO SCHOOL ACT, 1968

LOI DE 1968 SUR LE RETOUR À L'ÉCOLE

Mr David Johnson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 62, An Act to resolve labour disputes between teachers' unions and school boards and to amend the Education Act with respect to instructional time / *Projet de loi 62, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail opposant des syndicats d'enseignants et des conseils scolaires et modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne les heures d'enseignement.*

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The Speaker: All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Amott, Ted
Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Bassett, Isabel
Baughen, Marco
Boushy, Dave
Brown, Jim
Carr, Gary
Carroll, Jack
Clement, Tony
Cunningham, Dianne
Danford, Harry
Defana, Carl
Doyle, Ed
Ecker, Janet
Elliot, Brenda
Eves, Ernie L.
Fisher, Barbara
Flaherty, Jim
Ford, Douglas B.
Froese, Tom
Guzzo, Gary J.
Hammick, Charles
Harris, Michael D.
Hastings, John
Hodgson, Chris
Hudak, Tim
Jackson, Cameron
Johns, Helen
Johnson, Bert
Johnson, David
Jordan, W. Leo
Kees, Frank
Kleminuk, Gerry
Marian, Margaret
Martinuk, Joseph N.
Maves, Bart
McLean, Allan K.
Munro, Julia
Mushinski, Bill
Newman, Dan
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Palladini, Al
Rollins, E. J.
Douglas
Ross, Lillian
Runciman, Robert W.
Sampson, Rob
Saunderson, William
Shea, Dervyn
Sheehan, Frank
Skarica, Toni
Smith, Bruce
Snobelen, John
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tilson, David
Tsubouchi, David
Turnbull, David
VanKoughnet, Bill
Vienneuve, Noble
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth

The Speaker: All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Galt, Doug
Gichrist, Steve
Grimmett, Bill
Parker, John L.
Petit, Trevor
Preston, Peter
Wood, Bob
Young, Terence H.

Nays

Curling, Alvin
McLash, Frank
Morn, Gilles E.
North, Peter
Patten, Richard
Phillips, Gerry
Pouliot, Gilles
Pupatello, Sandra
Ramsey, David
Ruprecht, Tony
Sergio, Mano
Silipo, Tony
Wildman, Bud
Wood, Len
McLeod, Lyn
McGuire, Dalton
Marchese, Rosano
Lessard, Wayne
Larkin, Frances
Lalonde, Jean-Marie
Kwintler, Monte
Kormos, Peter
Kennedy, Gerard
Hoy, Pat
Grevelsen, John
Duncan, Dwight
Curling, Alvin

Minister.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 74; the nays are 41.

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): Quite simply, this is a bill to get our kids back into the classroom, where they deserve to be. At the same time, it allows the parties to carry on negotiations while the kids are back in the classroom or, if they choose, it allows for an arbitration-mediation process. It also deals with the essential issue of instructional time in these discussions in a definitive way.

I realize that this afternoon there may be different views on this bill. I simply ask that all the members of this House allow the bill to proceed. If the members feel they must vote against the bill, that's one course of action. But allow us to deal with this piece of legislation.

The Speaker: I appreciate that, but that's really not an explanatory note.

Hon David Johnson: Mr Speaker, I do seek unanimous consent from this House to call the Back to School Act this afternoon and to consider and to vote on both second and third readings of the legislation.

The Speaker: The minister has asked for unanimous consent. Agreed? No.

Introduction of bills.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The government House leader mentioned at his meeting today that the Minister of Education would be rising to bring this matter forward. We have indicated our opposition to proceeding with this bill on three readings in one day. We believe that the debate should commence on this bill, and if the minister wishes to debate this bill today.

The Speaker: What are you looking for, unanimous consent? Is that the point of order?

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): Two weeks ago, I met with concerned parents whose children were out of school as a result of teachers' strike for the second time in 12 months. My message to parents at that time was to wait, to give the process a chance, because we believed that the best solution was for school boards and teachers' unions to achieve a mutually acceptable negotiated settlement. We asked parents to give the system a chance to work. They have waited, and in too many cases their patience has not been rewarded. These circumstances are extraordinary and unprecedented. Some of Ontario's children have missed up to six weeks of class time in a year, and this is not acceptable to the parents and it's not acceptable to the government of Ontario.

Last Thursday I again met with the parents, and at that time I told them I could not in good conscience allow the strike and lockouts to continue. The government is listening to the parents and students of our province, and that is why earlier today I introduced the Back to School Act, 1998.

The parents of Ontario are anxious that their children get back to school and the children themselves are eager to return to the classroom with their teachers. There are so many positive changes waiting for them back at school. The elementary students, for example, will arrive at school to find a new, more rigorous curriculum, over three million new textbooks and a new and understandable report card.

This legislation I'm proposing today is balanced and focused. It is focused first, and above all, on getting students back to school. If passed by the Legislature, this bill would allow parties to continue negotiating but without any further loss of classroom time. Where a strike or lockout has resulted in a loss of instructional time, the legislation would require boards, in consultation with parents and teachers, to develop a plan to make up for the missed curriculum.

The proposed legislation would provide for either party to initiate a speedy and fair mediation and arbitration process. The mediator and arbitrator would of course be required to ensure that the final agreements permit the board to respect all conditions of the Education Act and its regulations. Until an agreement is reached, teachers' working conditions would be either those set by the school board in compliance with the Education Act or those agreed to by the parties. Salaries and benefits, however, could not be less than those in the previous collective agreement. The proposed legislation would also further define the standards on instructional time established by the Education Quality Improvement Act, 1997. This proposed definition would confirm what has always been the commonly understood definition of "instructional time"

Mr Bradley: Yes. I ask for unanimous consent to commence second reading debate on this bill today.

Interjection.

The Speaker: I'll get to you right after I put this unanimous consent. Everyone heard the unanimous consent. Agreed? No.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Perhaps we can help in this. We've looked at the government's piece of legislation —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I say to the government members, everyone has had their chance for unanimous consent here. I think it's only fitting that the third party be given the opportunity to speak to it.

1400

Mr Hampton: We've had a chance to look at the government's legislation. There are about two pages of this which deal with "back to work." There are about 15 pages at this point in time to sever this bill into two bills: one dealing strictly with back-to-work legislation, in other words, about the first two pages of the bill; the rest dealing with everything else that you've tried to add on and throw in.

We're prepared to deal with the first part here and now, but all the issues that deal with your arbitration procedure, that deal with the changes you propose to the Education Act, we believe they have nothing to do with "back to work." We want those dealt with. I ask for unanimous consent to sever the bill and deal with this —

The Speaker: Okay. The leader of the third party is seeking unanimous consent to sever the bill and that's in order. Is there unanimous consent to sever —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Member for Nepean, I don't want to debate with you. If you're not certain of this, then vote accordingly. All I'm asking you — it's in order to request to sever the bill. You've heard the member say where they'd like to sever it. Agreed? No.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Who said "no"? **The Speaker:** Look, I don't have to tell you. I heard a "no."

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that notwithstanding standing order 95(g), the requirement for notice for private members' public business be waived with respect to ballot items 21, 22, 23 and 24; and that notwithstanding standing order 95(d), Mrs Pupatello and Mr Cordiano exchange places in the order of precedence.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

was taken last week at the SkyDome. Some 40,000 children were offered an opportunity to give thumbs up or thumbs down to the Premier when it comes to education in Ontario, and everybody is aware of the results of that particular measurement.

This is all about kids; there's no doubt about that whatsoever. You say you want them back in the classroom. I said I want to come back to an offer I made last week. I said if you were to introduce a simple, clean, straightforward, honest bill that merely called for teachers to go back into the classroom and for school boards to be compelled to remove the locks from their doors and to provide for a process of fair and binding arbitration, we would pass that bill and kids would be in their classrooms this morning.

1410

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): They refused.

Mr McGuinty: You refused. We have been reasonable throughout; you have been unreasonable throughout. Parents understand who is responsible for this mess, students understand who is responsible for this mess, teachers understand, as do trustees.

If you want to be reasonable about this, then let's understand what the offer is once again so you can have the opportunity to reflect upon it and to stand up here in the House today and say: "We accept. We want the kids back in the classroom."

If you amend the existing bill instead of trying to have it all ways and to perpetuate this ongoing crisis, if you introduce a new bill or split the existing bill so that the bill we have to debate is in fact one which merely provides for the return of our teachers to their classrooms and requires that school boards take the locks off the classroom doors and provides for a process of fair and binding arbitration, we could have this bill a done deal in two days at most. That's fair. That's reasonable. If you are genuinely intent on returning children to our classrooms, I see no reason whatsoever why you can't accept that fair and reasonable offer.

If, on the other hand, you are intent on perpetuating an ongoing crisis, one that had its birth at the time you took office, one that you have helped promote and cultivate for the last two and a half years, then you won't accept that offer and you'll pretend that it's really us, the opposition, who are in the way of a fair and reasonable offer here when that's got nothing to do with it.

You can't trust Mike Harris to look after the educational interests of our kids. That's been clear from the outset. It remains clear to this point in time today.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): Three and a half years ago, the Minister of Education for this government told a bunch of education officials that he wanted to create a crisis in Ontario's education system. Virtually everyone in the province has seen that on tape: the Minister of Education for this government saying he wanted to create a crisis in education.

Now, three and a half years later, after you've taken a billion dollars out of school budgets, after you've destroyed all of the collective agreements the very day

and ensure that teachers spend more time teaching students.

Ontario wants to get all our students back to school. We want children in their classrooms, learning and growing, guided by teachers. We want the issues between the boards and teachers to be settled fairly but without further cost to our students. The proposed Back to School Act, 1998, would, if approved by the Legislature, allow us to achieve these goals in the best interests of all parties, but especially of our students.

I say to the opposition parties, we have a real opportunity today to do the right thing for our children of this province: to vote to let the kids get back to class tomorrow. I hope we will all take this opportunity to serve the children of Ontario. In that regard, I would like to conclude my remarks today by indicating that I will be asking again for unanimous consent to proceed with and vote on second and third readings of the legislation this afternoon.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I think it's important at the outset that we just take a moment or two to determine how we got ourselves — us — into this mess. There are 200,000 students across Ontario today who are not in their classrooms, and that is a direct result of your complete mismanagement of public education in Ontario.

From the moment you assumed office you set out to create a crisis. You said that was exactly what you were going to do. You did that by taking \$1 billion out of our classrooms. You set out in a very deliberate way to attack our teachers and the teaching profession. Never have teachers in this province felt so undervalued, felt that their confidence was so undermined as they do at the present time.

Then you introduced Bill 160. You were quite successful in turning every single child in the entire province outside of the classroom through that debate. Through Bill 160, you wrested complete control over all education; you took it upon yourself, whether we're talking about curriculum or funding. Then, for some reason known only to you, you decided that you were going to rip up 169 collective agreements. We have never seen the likes of that in this province since the social contract.

Then you introduced a funding formula, which has the net effect of meaning we're going to have fewer teachers available to teach our students, we're going to have school closures in Ontario, and from an individual student's perspective, that student will have less contact time with any one teacher.

Then you straitjacketed trustees so that trustees simply lack any flexibility whatsoever to sit down and negotiate in good faith with teachers.

Last week before a business audience, the Premier continued his attack on public education. He extended the attack to our students. He told the business audience, he told employers, that our kids simply aren't making the grade and that they don't measure up. This from the Premier of Ontario.

Parents understand who is responsible for this mess. In fact, so do kids. You may have noticed an informal poll

Before many students were supposed to go back to school, and after you have poured cold water on the negotiations that have been taking place across the province, you have indeed created a crisis, a very sorry crisis; you, the government. No one else has created this crisis. You have driven it in the media, you have driven it with your propaganda advertising, you have driven it with your unpromising legislation, you have driven it by taking over a billion dollars out of our classrooms, and mostly, over the last three weeks, you have driven it by placing obstacles in the path of boards and teachers every time they've tried to sit down to negotiate a collective agreement.

In all of Ontario history, there have been only three major clashes between the teachers of this province and the government. You have the record of promoting two of those clashes within the last year alone. That's what you've done to education in this province. You said you would create a crisis, and you have created a crisis.

I would like to say just a few words to the students who have been the victims of a purely political strategy choreographed by this government, a strategy that intentionally made children suffer so that you could go out there and vilify and attack teachers. The reality is that because your government has cut a billion dollars from public education, each child's classroom is more and more over-provided and under-resourced. The reality is that you as children can't get the attention from your teachers that you need and deserve. I know you want to be back in your classroom. We want you back in the classroom, but we have a government here that insists on driving this forward, interfering with the bargaining of collective agreements, and now, today, has come here with a similarly uncompromising position.

I'd like to say something to the teachers as well. You know the damage this government's cuts have done to education. You know how much underfunding and under-resourcing of the classroom is happening. You have taken a strong and principled stand against this government's destruction of education in our province. We know you want to be back in the classroom. We want children and teachers back in the classroom, but no one here is going to give effect to a piece of knee-jerk legislation which may well make the situation worse down the road.

I put my offer to the government again. I put my offer to the Premier and to the Minister of Education. If you read this legislation you know that only the first 10 sections — sections 1 to 10 — have anything to do with putting our children back in the classroom. Everything beyond that, from section 11 on to sections 23 and 24, has everything to do with putting children back in the classroom. I make the offer to this government once again. We are willing to sever the first 11 sections of this bill which deal with back to work, back to school. We're willing to sever them and we're willing to deal with them here, today, now. This will put the children back in the classroom.

The other sections which don't deal with having the children and the teachers back in the classroom deserve

ORAL QUESTIONS

1420

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. Premier, you'll be aware of the offer I made last week, which was a genuine effort to facilitate the return of over 200,000 children to their classrooms. You've introduced today a bill that is 19 pages in length. My question to you is very simple: Are you prepared to entertain any amendments whatsoever, any discussion of a splitting of this bill in order to expedite the return of over 200,000 children to their classrooms?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I think the minister can respond.

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): This government is more than anxious to see the students back in the classroom, and we will sever the bill. If the House leaders can sit down and look at this and come to an agreement, we are prepared to look at a severing of the bill. However, I will say that the bill would have to be severed in terms of part I and part III being in the bill. Part II, which deals with instructional time, we're prepared, under the proper circumstances, to see severed from the bill.

This would require all the members of the House to agree today, if we proceeded on that basis, that all readings would have to be accomplished today and that the kids would have to be back in the classroom tomorrow.

because that's what the objective is: to get the kids back

Mr McGuinty: It's interesting to learn here today

during question period that there is some flexibility here, because that wasn't expressed by your House leader on behalf of your government just a couple of hours ago. Just so I understand it, Minister —

Intervention.

Mr McGuinty: Speaker, if the Premier wants to take the question, then why doesn't he stand up?

Interventions.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order. I think you can negotiate elsewhere. This is question period.

Mr McGuinty: What I'm going to ask the minister to do, through the Premier, is to instruct his House leader to

meet with mine, and if they're in agreement, with the House leader for the third party immediately; to meet with them —

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): It

Interventions.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Isn't it funny they didn't ask that this morning at the House leaders' meeting.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr McGuinty: Is there anything to prevent, Minister and Premier, our House leaders from meeting immediately, right now? Secondly, are you telling me that it's a

take-it-or-leave-it proposition? You're prepared to do away with part II of the bill but every other single reference in the bill — parts I and III — is to be maintained? You have no flexibility there whatsoever?

Hon David Johnson: I'm sorry to disappoint the Leader of the Opposition by being flexible. You would think that would be a desirable trait in a government, to be flexible, but the only thing preventing us from having an agreement on this is the inability of the opposition parties to assure us that this bill, if severed, will receive second and third reading today, final dealings today, so that the kids can be back in class tomorrow.

If we can have those assurances from the opposition parties, then the House leader is more than happy to sit down and work out those details.

Mr McGuinty: On a point of order, Speaker. Given the urgency of the situation before us, I am seeking unanimous consent of the House so that we adjourn immediately, that we allow the House leaders an opportunity to meet and to explore —

Interventions.

The Speaker: Order. I want to hear this. Go ahead.

Mr McGuinty: — to explore the possibility that the Minister of Education tells me exists. I'm seeking unanimous consent on that front.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? Agreed?

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today: first reading, second reading, third reading. That will get the children back in the schools as soon as possible, possibly even tomorrow.

Everything after section 11 deals with something else, so I want it clearly from the Premier or the Minister of Education: Are you prepared, in the severance, to allow us to debate sections 11 through to the end of the bill? All it would take is perhaps one week. You, yourself, say in the legislation that the appointment of an arbitrator doesn't have to happen for 30 days, so your own deadline is some time over the next 30 days. All it would take is one week to go through these sections of the bill. Are you prepared to do that?

Hon David Johnson: We have indicated what we're prepared to do. We're prepared to sever the second part of this bill. The first part deals with the back-to-school legislation.

It's a very simple situation. Will the third party deal with the first part, which is the back-to-school legislation, if the government agrees to sever the second part, concerning instructional time, and deal with it at another point? Will the third party agree and deal with the rest of the bill, which hasn't been severed, in its totality, second and third reading today, and let the kids get back into school tomorrow?

Mr Hampton: Minister, this is your legislation. I'm going to read it to you. Section 4, "termination of lock-out"; We'll deal with that, no problem. We'll also deal with "prohibition re strike" and "prohibition re further lookout." We'll be happy to deal with the offence section. We'll be happy to deal with the deeming provision, terms of employment etc. All of these things deal with legitimate back-to-work issues, back-to-school issues.

All of the material about an appointment of an arbitrator, the arbitration process isn't going to begin until later on, the processes that the arbitrator must follow, the time limits the arbitrator must follow, the constraints on the arbitrator, judicial review of the arbitrator, all of those things that have nothing to do with getting the children back into the classroom tomorrow — we think we should wait on those. We think they should be subject to further important debate.

Minister, we're prepared to agree to passage right now, first, second and third reading, of all of the provisions which deal with back to school. But those that deal with arbitration —

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon David Johnson: Clearly, all those sections that the leader of the third party has indicated beyond section 10 are important to the process of getting the kids back in class, of resolving this whole matter.

We've made an offer. Is the third party going to quibble? Is that what we're faced with?

Interjections.

1440

Hon David Johnson: We have put forward a reasonable position. In the first instance, the bill is a very reasonable bill. However, having listened to the concerns of the opposition parties here today, we are prepared to have

back to class.

We have put forward a very reasonable position in terms of how to sever this bill, and I'm asking you today, yes or no, are you prepared to deal with the rest of the bill beyond that, the part that isn't severed, and get the kids back in the class tomorrow?

Mr Hampton: I find your response a bit confusing, to say the least. If you read the legislation, the first 11 sections are all about getting teachers and students back in the classroom and the conditions under which they will go back into the classroom. We agree with those. We'll support those; first, second and third reading today.

Everything after that deals with an arbitration process. In your own legislation, section 15, you say that the mediation arbitration proceedings shall be within 30 days. All we want is a week to discuss these things. Your own legislation says there's 30 days. Why this artificial constraint?

We can have the children back in the classroom tomorrow. We'll deal with the first 11 sections here and now. By your own admission, the sections that you want aren't going to take effect for 30 days. We can debate those this week and next week. What do you say?

Hon David Johnson: I would say that we have given a very reasonable offer. Part I is the resolution of the back-to-school issue, part II is the resolution of the instructional time and part III has to do with the short title. We have said that we will take part II out, sever part II. That is a reasonable offer that leaves the other two parts that can be dealt with this afternoon. If there is good intention to get the kids back to school, to deal with those two parts this afternoon and get the kids back to school tomorrow, this can be done. That has been done before; this can be done today. It only requires your goodwill to proceed with this. I ask you, will you give us your consent to proceed with parts I and III today and get the kids back to class?

The Speaker: New question, leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: To the Minister of Education again: Read your own bill. The first 11 sections deal with getting the teachers and the students back into the classroom. We'll vote for that today. We'll pass it into law today.

The other sections that you're talking about, the arbitration mediation sections, even your own timeline says 30 days. You may not need this, and you probably won't need it, for 30 days. We can debate that material, those provisions, over the next week to 10 days. You'll have them in plenty of time. Are you interested in getting the children back into the classroom tomorrow or are you interested in pushing some of this other material through that has nothing to do with getting the children back into the classroom tomorrow? Which is it?

Hon David Johnson: We're here today because we are interested in getting the kids back to class. We have put forward a fair proposal to deal with this. The leader of the third party apparently won't accept this and is holding the kids hostage for whatever reason, for whatever political reason.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, Minister.

Hon David Johnson: I've said several times here today that we're prepared to proceed with parts I and III tomorrow, but parts I and III will get the kids back into the schools and will clarify the process of resolving this matter of the negotiations. That's a very reasonable position and I ask the leader of the third party to reconsider and put the kids first and allow them to go back to school.

Mr Hampton: The Minister of Education is really confusing. I want to read section 15 of his bill. Section 15 says, "The mediator-arbitrator shall begin the mediation-arbitration proceedings within 30 days of his appointment." By your own timeline there is a 30-day procedure here. Then it says he's got 90 days, that he shall make an award 90 days after the appointment. By your own bill you could easily sever this material and you could very easily have the children back in the classroom tomorrow. We could debate some of these controversial sections and deal with them. You could appoint the arbitrators next week — next Monday, next Tuesday, next Thursday — whenever you want.

Why do you insist on having these provisions when, if you read these provisions, it's clear that you don't need them right away? You can have them sometime in the next 30 days. Why won't you compromise on this?

Hon David Johnson: We have put forward what I think is a very fair and reasonable compromise in this matter, because the definition of "instructional time" is very important as well to the negotiations that are underway. It is a key and central issue in many of the negotiation processes. But we've said: "Fine, if that's your concern, in an effort to get the kids back in class tomorrow we'll set aside that debate until tomorrow. We'll deal with that debate starting tomorrow, but today we'll deal with parts I and III." I don't know why you won't see that we have to get the kids back in class. Have you put some sort of philosophical theory before the need to get kids back into the class?

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: For the benefit of the House, I would like to ask the minister if he can clarify his answer.

The Speaker: That's not a point of order.

Mr Sergio: May I say something?

The Speaker: Clarifying an answer is not a point of order.

Mr Sergio: Can I please —

The Speaker: Tell me what your point of order is.

Mr Sergio: The minister keeps on saying that he's willing to split the bill —

The Speaker: That's not a point of order. Final supplementary, leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: Minister, I think you owe it to people to give an explanation. It's very clear from a reading of your

bill that the first 11 sections will have the teachers and students back in the classroom tomorrow. Everything that follows after section 11 deals with arbitration and mediation that may happen down the road, and even this bill that you've brought in here says the mediation probably won't start for 30 days and doesn't have to terminate for 90 days.

So I don't understand. You can have the children back in the classroom tomorrow. We will vote for sections 1 through 11, first reading, second reading, third reading, here and now. Why are you so insistent on getting something today that you don't need for 30 days and which will go on for 90 days? Please explain that to the students, explain that to the parents, and explain that to the teachers. We will vote to have the children back in the classroom; the arbitration process —

The Speaker: Question.

Mr Hampton: — can wait until next week. What's your answer?

Hon David Johnson: My answer is the same. This is not confusing; this is very simple. Mediation-arbitration does not need to start 30 days from now; it may start much sooner than 30 days from now. Boards and unions want and need these matters to be clarified.

There's no rocket science here. I think it boils down to, has the third party painted itself into a corner or is the third party concerned about the standards that are important in this particular bill? Are they concerned about having this process of resolving the strike get going or are they more concerned about quibbling about where in a particular bill, after what particular clause, and holding the kids hostage as a result and not allowing the kids back in class?

I ask you, leader of the third party, to stand up here today and say you will give your consent on the severing that we propose and allow the kids to get back in school tomorrow.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): A question to the Minister of Education. As a result of your Bill 160 and regulations under Bill 160 issued by your ministry, you're requiring the Toronto Catholic District School Board to consider the closure of 29 Catholic elementary schools here in Toronto. The students, parents and teachers of these 29 schools have been given a very unreasonable deadline of November 15 to decide the future of their schools.

Mr Minister, will you be reasonable and give these parents and students and teachers enough time to respond, beyond this November 15 deadline?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): First of all, as the member opposite knows only too well, the Ministry of Education is not requiring any board anywhere in Ontario to close any schools. The Ministry of Education, through the funding formula, is providing adequate funds for the accommodation of the

students, and in fact is requiring that if boards are looking at closing a particular school anywhere, they do so in consultation with the parents. The Ministry of Education is requiring that by the end of this year, if boards are intending to have schools count in their inventory, they notify the Ministry of Education. It's as simple as that. But all the decisions that are made in terms of school closures are made by the local board.

Mr Collier: At the public meetings that are being held in Toronto, the board is saying they are doing these closures because of you, your cuts in Bill 160 and your funding, or your lack of funding. Minister, you now have complete control over all aspects of education in this province as a result of Bill 160. We have never had schools close in the city of Toronto, Catholic schools. Now you're asking them to consider 29 schools being closed. Will you stand up on your feet and say you will not allow any of these 29 schools to be closed while you are minister?

Hon David Johnson: The member opposite indicates that a certain board has never had schools close. I don't have the precise statistics here before me today with the new House book, but rest assured I will at the next question period. But I do know that under the Liberal government there were literally well over 100 schools that closed in the province between 1985 and 1990. When the NDP were in office, again there were a number of schools that were closed across Ontario each and every year.

Interventions.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order.

Hon David Johnson: I'll apologize if I recall incorrectly, but my recollection is that there were nearly 150 schools closed between 1985 and 1990.

The province of Ontario provides adequate funding for school boards for all purposes. There will actually be more money spent in the 1998-99 school year at elementary and secondary than ever in the history of the province, more money spent on elementary and secondary over the next year. Within the context of that increased funding, most of it directed into the classroom, the boards make the decisions on which schools to close or not to close.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): To the Minister of Education: Minister, I'm confused by your position today. I want to read to you a memorandum from one of its own ministry officials which is equally confusing. It's dated September 14 and it's a memorandum to directors of education from Michel Robineau of the Ministry of Education. It says, "Attached please find an update of the following reports which outline the status of teacher negotiations as of September 10."

Then it goes over to the Sudbury separate school board and it says — this is the board's position — "Meetings terminated. Will wait for back-to-work legislation." This is September 10, and that was the board's position. Minister, can you tell us what you did to get the board back to the bargaining table between September 10 and now?

Trict School Board:

Hon David Johnson: Since we are today reading our internal memos or memos of whatever nature, I also have a memo here from the chair of the Toronto Catholic District School Board:

"The chair of the Toronto Catholic District School Board announced today that the board is planning to open its schools as soon as an agreement is reached with the secondary teachers' union or the government's back-to-school legislation is passed. Naturally, if no agreement can be reached with the teachers' union, the board expects Mr McGuinty and Mr Hampton and the Liberal and the NDP caucuses to vote in favour of the legislation so that students can be back in the classroom as early as tomorrow morning."

It's probably not a great surprise that I get quite a number of letters from various school boards, from various people, but this government has listened in particular to the parents, and the parents have taken quite an interest in the situation. The parents have come to me on more than one occasion, obviously in an organized way and through various means, and have said, "Enough is enough; we need to get the kids back into the classroom."

I've got plenty of evidence. For example, this is from Don Folz. He's the education director for one of the boards affected by your back-to-work legislation, the Peterborough area Catholic board. Mr Folz sent a letter to you just over a week ago. He told the minister that the two sides were "on the cusp of an agreement. Then you issued your statement and your statement made it impossible."

That's from a director of education. He says that you, the minister, destroyed their bargaining relationship.

I put it to you again, Minister. We've got this legislation. We are prepared to pass right now, today, first, second and third readings of the sections which deal with getting the teachers back into the classroom. The arbitration issues can wait until next week. Will you take that offer?

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We have a piece of legislation, I say to the leader of the third party, that will do that today. We'll sever out the second part, and if we do that we're simply asking for then we can get the kids back into class. Surely that's what we all want to accomplish here today.

1500

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph): My question today is

for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. My riding of Guelph has a very diverse and interesting arts and culture sector. I know the minister herself is familiar with the Guelph Spring Festival, the Guelph Jazz Festival, the Hillside Festival, and recently she personally

the visited the River Run Centre. It too is thriving.

My constituents were pleased to see the finance minister last May announce the creation of a \$25-million arts

endowment fund to match and invest money for participating arts organizations. I think this is an exciting opportunity here for partnerships among businesses, the

government, the community and the culture sector.

Minister, would you please tell my constituents, the arts organizations in my riding and in other ridings across the province how they can access this new arts endowment

fund and what the benefits will be?

Hon Isabel Bassett (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): Certainly this is a very exciting initiative and my ministry is already in the process of communicating how various arts groups can communicate

and can access the fund. We have been in touch with all of the arts organizations already and bulletins will be out there.

It is a wonderful way for arts groups to form partnerships. It shows how government can help arts groups, as a matter of fact, form partnerships with businesses and the public, as you mentioned, by matching funds that they

raise together. This will lead to more and much greater donations. This has been proved by many such funds

dealing with arts and universities. The government is going to match on a dollar-for-dollar basis money raised

by not-for-profit arts groups right across the province.

Mrs Elliott: Thank you, Minister. Would you please specify which organizations are eligible to access this

fund and how they will go about doing it?

Hon Ms Bassett: Because it's important for us that all arts organizations, large and small, will have access to this fund, we have made sure that all organizations right

across the province, of all sizes, will be eligible for the fund if they are not-for-profit professional arts groups.

The program recognizes that the needs of different arts organizations differ and we've made the program flexible

enough to ensure that smaller organizations will be in a good position to participate and benefit from the fund.

Monies raised will be matched. For example, if you raise \$25,000, \$25,000 will be added by the government; it'll get to \$50,000. This will then generate a certain

amount of money every year for operating funds. Anybody

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): My question is for

the Minister of Education and Training. Minister, we are all acutely aware of the fact that we are three weeks, and

in some cases four weeks, into the school year and public attention has understandably focused on those students

who are out of school because of lockouts or strikes. In the meantime, there are some very vulnerable students who

are either out of school or in class without the supports they need to be able to function in their class because you

can't get your act together.

We have heard from parents and teachers who are extremely concerned about the fact that, three and four

weeks into the school year, the special education dollars that you have committed to support special needs students

in our schools have not actually reached the school boards. Minister, why has the money for special needs students

that you have promised to those individual students not actually reached the boards so that teachers and assistants

can be hired for their support?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): The key word there is "promise," and we will

live up to that promise. For the first time a government has protected special education funding. Never in the history

of the province has special education funding been protected before, and we have done so to the tune of over

\$1 billion.

Notwithstanding that we have protected it by over \$1 billion, there was the odd report coming back that in a

board here or there special education students who had received services last year might not get the same services

this year, so we said: "We won't allow that to happen. We'll ensure that every special education student who has

been receiving services continues to receive them. As a result, we have gone through an audit process this summer

with the various boards. That audit process is coming to a conclusion. There will be at least another \$40 million over

and above the \$1 billion put into special education, and the boards will be receiving that money very shortly to

ensure —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you.

Mrs McLeod: Here is the real face of a Tory promise:

Talk a lot about all the money you're putting into special education, but almost a month into the school year and our

most vulnerable students are not seeing the benefits of any of those dollars. This is absolutely inexcusable. It appears

to be widespread across the province. We have heard from parents from Essex to Toronto to Thunder Bay and Rainy

River. Those boards made their submissions to you months ago. They have been approved. The problems

seem to have been ironed out. They're told there is supposed to be enough money. The money has been promised

and it is not flowing. Those kids are sitting in classes or at

home because they can't get the support you keep publicly promising and haven't delivered, and this morning your ministers were on the phone reassuring boards that the money would indeed be coming.

Will you guarantee that school boards will have the money for special-needs students by tomorrow morning so they can hire the staff that's needed to support our most vulnerable students?

Hon David Johnson: This government is committed to special education. This money is flowing through the pipeline. It will all be at the school boards in the very near future. The school boards know this money is coming. All that is happening is that the exact amount is being fine-tuned according to the needs of the individual students and an independent audit has taken place through the summer to determine the precise amount of money for each board. That is being wrapped up. This government, again, is the first government which has protected this money for special education students, and this money, the first in history to be protected, to be directed solely to special education students, will be announced precisely in the very near future.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): To the Minister of Education: I think we would all agree in this Legislature that it is quite unusual for a piece of legislation to receive first, second and third readings in the same day and then be passed into law that day as well. That only happens in emergency or extraordinary circumstances. I agree with you that having children back in the classroom now is an extraordinary situation. That's why I've said to you that all of the sections of this bill, 1 through 11, which deal with getting the children back into the classroom tomorrow, we will pass here and now, one, two and three, first reading, second reading and third reading, today.

What I don't understand is the arbitration measures, which you yourself say are going to take place sometime between the next 30 and 90 days: Why are they an emergency? Can you tell us why they are an emergency? They're not going to happen for the next 30 to 90 days? Why would you want to ram those through? Why is that for some reason an emergency for you? Can you explain that?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): First of all, the arbitration proceedings don't necessarily start 30 days from now; the arbitration proceedings could start much quicker than that. I think the leader of the third party knows that. He's making a certain interpretation which he knows is on the far end of the scale.

Secondly, over the years there have been a number of cases of back-to-school legislation before this Legislature, quite a number of pieces of legislation, which have been dealt with in the same day; all three readings in the very same day. There are any number of cases and I'm sure the leader of the third party knows that. Indeed the NDP,

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): My question is for the Minister of Labour. Recently the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board had good news for a number of businesses in the Peterborough area: 43 greater Peterborough area companies received cheques totalling more than \$200,000 for collectively improving their workplace health and safety performance. Minister, could you please expand on the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board's safe communities initiative program and its benefits.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour): I thank the member for Peterborough for the question. As the Minister and Insurance Board's safe communities incentive program. It's a program that works and it's vital for occupational health and safety and the future of health and safety in the workplaces of Ontario.

The program is a community-based health and safety experience rating program designed to help small businesses improve health and safety and reduce their compensation costs. Under the program, the companies gain access to an expert health and safety consulting team and new training policy. The group then receives 75% of any savings re-

it. I simply ask for your support today.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): My question is for the Minister of Labour. Recently the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board had good news for a number of businesses in the Peterborough area: 43 greater Peterborough area companies received cheques totalling more than \$200,000 for collectively improving their workplace health and safety performance. Minister, could you please expand on the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board's safe communities initiative program and its benefits.

It simply deals with "back to school" and the process for resolving the dispute. Nothing could be simpler. You had this bill over the weekend. You had the opportunity to see it. I simply ask for your support today.

The third party, when it was in office, introduced back-to-school legislation. There's nothing unusual about this. It simply deals with "back to school" and the process for resolving the dispute. Nothing could be simpler. You had this bill over the weekend. You had the opportunity to see it. I simply ask for your support today.

Hon David Johnson: It's very simple. Through the years this House has entertained any number of pieces of back-to-school legislation. Many of those have been dealt with on the same day. Why is the leader of the third party holding the kids up for ransom? Why are you holding the kids hostage today?

You can have the children back in the classroom tomorrow by passing sections 1 through 11 here and now, today. Why won't you do that, Minister? Why won't you take up that offer? Pass them now. Have this through the Legislature. Have the children back in the classroom tomorrow. Why won't you do that?

1510

You can have the children back in the classroom tomorrow by passing sections 1 through 11 here and now, today. Why won't you do that, Minister? Why won't you take up that offer? Pass them now. Have this through the Legislature. Have the children back in the classroom tomorrow. Why won't you do that?

Mr Hampton: Again we don't get an answer from this minister. Your own bill provides that even after teachers are back in the classroom and students are back in the classroom there will be time for further negotiation. I haven't heard out of you at all this afternoon why you have to have these arbitration provisions, the arbitrations which don't have to begin for 30 days and continue on for 90 days. I don't understand your position. I don't understand the urgency for this. You've given no reason.

House.

it needs is the co-operation of all the members of the unusual in this kind of circumstance. It's very simple. All

during their stay in office, had at least two pieces of legislation which were introduced to the House. So this is not

PETITIONS

TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario.

"Whereas a tractor-trailer truck carrying a variety of explosives was involved in a single-vehicle accident on Highway 17 west, near Sudbury, causing an explosion which destroyed a 100-foot section of the highway and created a crater 15 feet deep;

"Whereas a shock wave resulting from the explosion broke doors, windows, frames and soffits on houses, causing significant personal and property damage;

"Whereas the residents of Ontario have the right to know what emergency plans are in place when dangerous cargo is being transported on our highways;

"Whereas the residents of Ontario have a right to know what restrictions and precautions the Ministry of Transportation places on companies who haul dangerous cargoes;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Mike Harris government call a public inquiry into this accident in order to make recommendations that will ensure this type of horrific accident does not happen again and to answer the many questions the people of northern Ontario have."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington): I have a petition presented to the Minister of Health, the member for Waterloo North, who of course is unable to present petitions in this House and has asked me to do it. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas nurses in Ontario often experience coercion to participate in practices which directly contravene their deeply held ethical standards;

"Whereas pharmacists in Ontario are often pressured to dispense or sell chemicals and/or devices contrary to their moral or religious beliefs;

"Whereas public health workers in Ontario are expected to assist in providing controversial services and procedures to give referrals for medications, treatments and/or procedures which they believe to be gravely immoral;

"Whereas competent health care workers and students in various health care disciplines in Ontario have been denied training, employment, continued employment and advancement in their intended fields and suffered other

a motion which will help us deal with the issue at hand.

Mr Hampton: I'm asking unanimous consent to move a motion for that particular bill? Is that OK?

Why don't you seek unanimous consent first off, so you can move a motion for that particular bill?

The Speaker: I know it's tough. I know it's very difficult — OK, now he's agreed. He can move his motion. You can still say no to his motion, but now he gets a chance to move his motion.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: I think I am in the middle of a point of order. That's the difficulty right now.

Mr Hampton: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: If this will help with the impasse, I ask for unanimous consent. This is a motion that we will debate parts I and III until midnight. That gives us approximately three sessional days to debate those, and we go to committee of the whole so that amendments can be put on those sections within that time frame. We agree that we'll have first, second and third reading by midnight. But part II of your bill is severed and will not be dealt with and we will not deal with that until sometime in the future.

The Speaker: I think I got that.

The Speaker: It's not really negotiable. It's not debatable either.

Hon Mr Sterling: On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Order. I'm in a point of order. I can't very well do this. The difficulty I have is that I'm in a point of order.

The Speaker: All right. Fine. I'm going to hear the point of order from the government House leader if that's agreeable. Is that agreeable? Point of order.

Hon Mr Sterling: Mr Speaker, I think we're in agreement with the general thrust of this. Perhaps if the leader of the third party could put it after petitions, which is about 20 minutes, so that we can put this down in writing and get it straight, if that would be agreeable.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think it's reasonable because it's the agreement that the three House leaders had just a few minutes ago back there.

Mr Bradley: No. I think the members should know, and I think the government House leader will confirm, that this is essentially what was already agreed to back there and I was under the impression that the government had agreed to that. Essentially, that's what it was.

The Speaker: OK, let's agree to put this after petitions. Agreed? Agreed.

"Whereas the HSRC recommends building upon a site that has no room for growth beyond the year 2003 and will be unable to meet the community's future needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to instruct the Health Services Restructuring Commission to consolidate all hospital services at the Hotel Dieu site, which offers 28 acres of property for future development, with one board and one administration."

I have also signed the petition.

1530

TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): This is a petition to the Ontario Legislature.

"Whereas a tractor-trailer truck carrying a variety of explosives was involved in a single-vehicle accident on Highway 17 west, near Sudbury," and near Nickel Belt, "causing an explosion which destroyed a 100-foot section of the highway and created a crater 15 feet deep;

"Whereas a shock wave resulting from the explosion broke doors, windows, frames and soffits on houses, causing significant personal and property damage;

"Whereas the residents of Ontario have the right to know what emergency plans are in place when dangerous cargo is being transported on our highways....;

"Whereas the residents of Ontario have the right to know what restrictions and precautions the Ministry of Transportation places on companies who haul dangerous cargo;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Mike Harris government call a public inquiry into this accident in order to make recommendations that will ensure this type of horrific accident does not happen again and to answer the many questions people of northern Ontario," and Nickel Belt, "have,"

I will sign this petition.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): "Whereas a tractor-trailer truck carrying a variety of explosives was involved in a single-vehicle accident on Highway 17 west, near Sudbury," in the riding of Nickel Belt, "causing an explosion which destroyed a 100-foot section of the highway and created a crater 15 feet deep;

"Whereas a shock wave resulting from the explosion broke doors, windows, frames and soffits on houses" in the riding of Nickel Belt, "causing significant personal and property damage;

"Whereas the residents of northern Ontario," and Nickel Belt, "have the right to know what protections are in place for residents who live in close proximity to vehicles carrying destructive materials;

forms of unjust discrimination because of the dictates of their consciences;

"Whereas health care workers experiencing such unjust discrimination have at present no practical and accessible legal means to protect themselves;

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

It's signed by quite a number of constituents from the Waterloo-Wellington area.

TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Ontario Legislature.

"Whereas a tractor-trailer truck carrying a variety of explosives was involved in a single-vehicle accident on Highway 17 west, near Sudbury," in the riding of Nickel Belt, "causing an explosion which destroyed a 100-foot section of the highway and created a crater 15 feet deep;

"Whereas a shock wave resulting from the explosion broke doors, windows, frames and soffits on houses, causing significant personal and property damage;

"Whereas the residents of Ontario," and Nickel Belt, "have the right to know what emergency plans are in place when dangerous cargo is being transported on our highways;

"Whereas the residents of Ontario," and Nickel Belt, "have the right to know what restrictions and precautions the Ministry of Transportation places on companies who haul dangerous cargo;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Mike Harris government call a public inquiry into this accident in order to make recommendations that will ensure this type of horrific accident does not happen again and to answer the many questions the people of northern Ontario," and Nickel Belt, "have,"

Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall): I have a petition signed by 7,225 residents from the greater Cornwall area.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission recommends two sites, two boards and two administrations for Cornwall and area hospitals;

"Whereas the HSRC recommends the closing of hospital lab services in Cornwall;

"Whereas the residents of Ontario have a right to know what protections are in place for residents who live in close proximity to vehicles carrying destructive materials;"

"Whereas the residents of Ontario have the right to know what restrictions and precautions the Ministry of Transportation places on companies who haul dangerous cargo;"

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Mike Harris government call a public inquiry into this accident in order to make recommendations that will ensure this type of horrific accident does not happen again and to answer the many questions the people of northern Ontario have."

I sign my signature to the petition as well.

PROSTATE CANCER

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This week is Prostate Cancer Awareness Week in Sudbury, and the following petition is to the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas prostate cancer is the fourth-leading cause of fatal cancer in Ontario in 1996;

"Whereas prostate cancer is the second-leading cause of fatal cancer for males;

"Whereas early detection is one of the best tools for being victorious in our battle against cancer; and

"Whereas the early detection blood test known as PSA, which is prostate-specific antigen, is one of the most effective tests at diagnosing early prostate cancer;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to encourage the Ministry of Health" and the Minister of Health "to have this test added to the list of services covered by OHP and that this be done immediately in order for us to save lives and to beat prostate cancer."

I affix my signature to the petition.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

Bill 15, An Act to cut taxes for people and for small business and to implement other measures contained in the 1998 Budget / Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à réduire les impôts des particuliers et des petites entreprises et à mettre en oeuvre d'autres mesures contenues dans le budget de 1998.

Bill 26, An Act to promote public safety through the creation of community safety zones / Projet de loi 26, Loi visant à favoriser la sécurité publique par la création de zones de sécurité communautaires;

"Whereas the residents of" northern "Ontario," and Nickel Belt, "have the right to know what restrictions and precautions the Ministry of Transportation places on companies who haul dangerous cargo;"

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Mike Harris government call a public inquiry into this accident in order to make recommendations that will ensure this type of horrific accident does not happen again and to answer the many questions people of northern Ontario," and Nickel Belt, "have."

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): I too have a petition similar to the one just read about a very important issue that's taking place in the riding of Nickel Belt. It states, and I'll just read it once again:

"Whereas a tractor-trailer truck carrying a variety of explosives was involved in a single-vehicle accident on Highway 17 west, near Sudbury" — Nickel Belt — "causing an explosion which destroyed a 100-foot section of the highway and created a crater 15 feet deep;

"Whereas a shock wave resulting from the explosion broke doors, windows, frames and soffits on houses, causing significant personal and property damage;

"Whereas the residents of Ontario have the right to know what emergency plans are in place when dangerous cargo is being transported on our highways;

"Whereas the residents of Ontario have the right to know what protections are in place for residents who live in close proximity to vehicles carrying destructive materials;"

"Whereas the residents of Ontario have the right to know what restrictions and precautions the Ministry of Transportation places on companies who haul dangerous cargo;"

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Mike Harris government call a public inquiry" immediately "into this accident" in Nickel Belt "in order to make recommendations that will ensure this type of horrific accident does not happen again and to answer the many questions people of northern Ontario," and Nickel Belt,

I've signed my signature to this as well.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I have a similar petition which greatly impacts the people of Nickel Belt, and there is a great deal of concern. It goes as follows:

"Whereas a tractor-trailer carrying a variety of explosives was involved in a single-vehicle accident on Highway 17 west, near Sudbury," in the riding of Nickel Belt, "causing an explosion which destroyed a 100-foot section of the highway and created a crater 15 feet deep;

"Whereas a shock wave resulting from the explosion broke doors, windows, frames and soffits on houses, causing significant personal and property damage;

"Whereas the residents of Ontario have the right to know what emergency plans are in place when dangerous cargo is being transported on our highways;

Bill 28, An Act to permit the Collection of Personal Information for the Payment of the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families / Projet de loi 28, Loi permettant la collecte de renseignements personnels en vue du versement du supplément de revenu de l'Ontario pour les familles travaillieuses ayant des frais de garde d'enfants;

Bill 31, An Act to promote economic development and create jobs in the construction industry, to further work-place democracy and to make other amendments to labour and employment statutes / Projet de loi 31, Loi visant à promouvoir le développement économique et à créer des emplois dans l'industrie de la construction, favorisant la démocratie en milieu de travail et apportant d'autres modifications aux lois ayant trait au travail et à l'emploi;

Bill 36, An Act to amend the Election Act and the Election Finances Act, and to make related amendments to other statutes / Projet de loi 36, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale et la Loi sur le financement des élections et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois;

Bill 37, An Act to designate a week of recognition for Ontario's Farmers / Projet de loi 37, Loi désignant une semaine de reconnaissance envers les agriculteurs de l'Ontario;

Bill 44, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 44, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la cité de Toronto;

Bill 51, An Act to amalgamate Sunnybrook Hospital and Orthopaedic and Arthritic Hospital and to transfer all assets and liabilities of Women's College Hospital to the amalgamated hospital / Projet de loi 51, Loi fusionnant les hôpitaux nommés Sunnybrook Hospital et Orthopédic and Arthritic Hospital et transférant l'actif et le passif de l'hôpital nommé Women's College Hospital à l'hôpital issue de la fusion;

Bill Pt15, An Act respecting The Corporation of the City of Kitchener;

Bill Pt17, An Act respecting Redeemer Reformed Christian College;

Bill Pt18, An Act respecting Eastern Pentecostal Bible College;

Bill Pt19, An Act respecting the Municipality of Chatham-Kent;

Bill Pt21, An Act respecting Canadian Information Processing Society of Ontario.

1540

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I guess we have unanimous consent at this point to move a motion without notice.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Do we have unanimous consent to move a motion? Agreed.

Hon Mr Sterling: I move:

(1) That Bill 62, An Act to resolve labour disputes between teachers' unions and school boards and to amend the Education Act with respect to instructional time shall

(2) That the House be permitted to sit beyond its normal adjournment time, but no later than 11:45 pm, for the purposes of considering the modified bill;

(3) That notwithstanding any standing order relating to Bill 62, An Act to resolve labour disputes between teachers' unions and school boards and to amend the Education Act with respect to instructional time, when Bill 62 is next called, three hours shall be allotted to the second reading stage of the bill;

(4) That at the end of those three hours the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill and the bill shall then be referred to committee of the whole House for immediate consideration, and that up to two hours be allotted for consideration of the bill at that stage;

(5) That at the end of that period, up to two hours, the chair of the committee shall without further debate or amendment put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto and report the bill to the House;

(6) That upon receiving the report of the committee of the whole House, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, which question shall be decided without debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

(7) That the order for third reading of the bill shall then immediately be called and one hour shall be allocated to the third reading stage of the bill.

(8) At the end of that time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment.

(9) That in the case of any divisions relating to any proceeding on the bill, the division bells shall be limited to five minutes and that there shall be no deferral of the vote pursuant to standing order 28(h).

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Mr Sterling: Before calling the bill which has just been introduced today, I would ask for unanimous consent to revert to introduction of bills so we can introduce a bill relating to part II of the bill.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Mr David Johnson moved second reading of the following bill:

INSTRUCTION TIME:
MINIMUM STANDARDS ACT, 1998
LOI DE 1998
SUR LES HEURES D'ENSEIGNEMENT :
NORMES MINIMALES

Mr David Johnson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 63, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to instructional time / Projet de loi 63, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne les heures d'enseignement.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."
All those opposed, please say "nay."
In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Carried.

Minister of Education.

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): No comments at this time, Mr Speaker.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algonia): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Just for the information of the House, I think we all recognize that the long title of Bill 62, if and when we get to debate it today, as per the motion passed with unanimous consent, will have to change as per the bill that has just been introduced by the minister.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Orders of the day.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Bill 62, An Act to resolve labour disputes between teachers' unions and school boards and to amend the Education Act with respect to instructional time.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: That's exactly the one raised by — the titling of this second reading debate. The bill has now been changed. It no longer includes an amendment to the Education Act on instructional time. I don't want to prolong this, but maybe it's necessary to make an immediate change to that name in order to introduce this revised bill.

The Speaker: I think it's true that they can amend that on the table to amend at committee of the whole, don't you? Okay.

Hon David Johnson: You're absolutely right, ask the teachers. Ask the principals, ask the people who are there in the classroom, who have a stake in the classroom, and they will tell you that the average class size is important. Unfortunately, what's happened between 1991 and 1997, as one example, is that the average class size at the elementary level has gone up each and every year. It's time to put a stop to that growth in the class sizes.

Hon David Johnson: You're absolutely right, ask the teachers. Ask the principals, ask the people who are there in the classroom, who have a stake in the classroom, and they will tell you that the average class size is important. Unfortunately, what's happened between 1991 and 1997, as one example, is that the average class size at the elementary level has gone up each and every year. It's time to put a stop to that growth in the class sizes.

Some people say to me, "There still will be classes of 35," or "There still will be classes of 40." But you know what? If we didn't put the cap on the class size, they'd be even greater still. The smaller classes get bigger, the bigger classes get bigger, the average classes get bigger. They all get bigger, but we've put a stop to that. For the first time in the history of education in Ontario, we have said that cannot carry on. We must stop the growth in the average class size in Ontario: 25 at the elementary, 22 at the secondary.

It's interesting that some boards are having to work to meet those standards because their average class sizes are higher and they have to bring them down. They've negotiated some of those, as my colleague has indicated, with the teachers, with the unions during that period of time, and those negotiations and those contracts —

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough-Eilesmere): Social contract.

Hon David Johnson: —social contracts as a case in point, have resulted in some higher class sizes. I don't think we want to see that. So we've, for the first time, put a halt to that.

But what's happening now is that some of the boards are having to work, because they're having to make more great? The money is based on those class sizes and it's protected. It's based on those class sizes, so they have the money to do it, and that's just great. That's one of the standards that we're very concerned about in education.

Another standard, I might say, is the number of days that our students have: 190 instructional days in Ontario. At the secondary level, that includes 10 days of examination time, but those days for the first time recently give our students the same number of instructional days as students in other provinces. It reflects perhaps not kindly on us, on the government of Ontario, on the Ministry of Education, that we had let this slip over the years so that our students were getting fewer days of instructional time than students in other provinces at the secondary level, our students receiving 10 days below the average of students across the rest of Canada.

Then what happens is that the students from Ontario participate in international tests, they participate in national tests, and the results are not what we would want to see. The results, unfortunately, are that the students from the province of Ontario do not score as well as students from Alberta or British Columbia, and frankly too many other provinces, in mathematics, in science.

Is it any wonder? Has it been any wonder in the past? If our students don't have the opportunity for the same number of instructional days, if they don't have the benefit of lower class sizes, if the class sizes keep increasing, they're not given a fair opportunity. Our teachers are not given a fair opportunity.

The Premier last week in a speech said we have excellent teachers in the province of Ontario but the system needs to be changed. That's what he was referring to: the system. The system is such that our students did not have the advantage of the same number of instructional days as

This is a matter that comes up from time to time and passed.

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This is a matter that comes up from time to time and passed.

flexibility in being able to deal with essentially half of the "instructional time," which was the topic of debate last year during Bill 160.

This government understands what the definition of "instructional time" is. The definition of "instructional time" is teachers teaching our students in the classroom. Parents understand that definition of instructional time. But some of the negotiations have taken place and have pushed the bounds of that definition, which, while we understand it, while parents understand it, was not contained within Bill 160.

As a matter of fact, instructional time has never been defined. The NDP government, the Liberal government,

all previous governments, previous Progressive Conservative governments, have not ever defined the term "instructional time," nor have they defined the term "pupil," for example. These are words that I guess —

Mrs McLeod: We left it to the bargaining unit. We didn't have chaos.

Hon David Johnson: — the critic from the Liberal Party says it was left to the bargaining process. Unfortunately now the bargaining process is pushing the bounds of the definition and is including activities which clearly are not classroom activities within the definition of "instructional time." Parents and this government understand that while these activities may indeed be worthwhile — monitoring cafeterias, for example, is worthwhile; hall monitoring is worthwhile — they're all worthwhile activities but they are not instructional time and they shouldn't be treated as instructional time.

Bear in the mind that the secondary school teachers in Ontario traditionally have had three and three quarter hours of classroom activity, but the remainder of the day is outside of the classroom. I'm sure they have a myriad of functions that they must accomplish. Perhaps cafeteria supervision and hall monitoring are part of those activities, but we simply say that those non-classroom activities should not be part of instructional time.

That's what the other part of the bill will accomplish. It will make that clear by making the definition of "instructional time" clear, that it does involve classroom activity, regularly scheduled classroom activity, the teaching of credit courses, but not only credit courses, they could be co-operative programs, they could be apprenticeship programs, English as a second language. Special education is included, of course; remedial action is included. All these activities are included.

By defining "instructional time" in that way, I believe we are enhancing the quality of education for our students and we are setting a framework for more successful negotiations. Removing one issue, apparently, where there is some shadow of a doubt in the minds of either the unions or the board, removing that shadow of a doubt as to what "instructional time" means, will surely set a more solid framework for successful negotiations, and I'm confident

that it will be helpful to those boards that haven't yet been able to negotiate a contract.

We've severed that out, though. We've said if that's of concern to the opposition parties, if they don't wish to see instructional time defined as part of this particular bill, if they were going to hold up the bill to get kids back into the school because of that issue, then we'll take that out. We certainly have that flexibility, because our main goal is to get the kids back into the class. We will deal, though, with instructional time at another date, and that other date could be as early as tomorrow because it remains the most important issue.

I guess I won't take a great deal of time here today, because we do have a spirit of co-operation and we do have, I believe, the very real prospect of getting our kids back to class tomorrow.

But I want to say that when the kids do go back to the class, particularly at the elementary level, they have a good deal to look forward to. I'm really proud that this government has introduced a new curriculum, a better curriculum. It's long overdue, and I hear plaudits from across Ontario with regard to a new curriculum that stresses the basics, that has specific expectations. For the first time in many a year, the students know what they are to accomplish by the end of that year, and the parents know what the students are to accomplish and the teachers know what the students are to accomplish by the end of that year. The teachers had no specific expectations at the end of each year. At the end of grade 3 and at the end of grade 6 they had expectations, but in other grades it varied from school to school, from board to board, and the teachers have communicated this to me.

I must say that I was involved earlier in the summer with about 800 teachers in marking the grade 3 mathematics test. You'll be relieved to know that I wasn't marking, but the teachers were marking. We needed — I say "we," but the Education Quality Assessment Office, the EQAO, needed about 1,800 teachers for this whole marking process, 1,800 teachers for the grade 3 test, the reading and the writing and the mathematics. How many do you suppose applied to be involved?

Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea): It was 5,500.

Hon David Johnson: You're right. Derwyn Shea wins the prize. He was right on: 5,500 teachers applied because they thought it was a wonderful exercise. They've been involved in it all through the piece.

Mrs Mushinski: They like it.

Hon David Johnson: They love it. They love the testing and they love being involved in the marking. They're extremely supportive. You may be surprised that they were so delighted by the process. It was good for the students. It's good for the teachers; it's a professional development tool. They love the process.

I'm finding that teachers in general — I'm talking about the elementary level — have been involved, and our success has been that teachers have been involved in every aspect of the reforms we've brought in at the elementary

And you know what? We haven't even come to the end of it. Having saved that \$13 million — and the next phase is coming along, which is science equipment, I'm delighted to say, plus some computer software — there will be more books again, because we're going to use up the whole \$100 million. We're going to buy new books, kindergarten resources, computer software for kids and science equipment. We're going to get that discount again and we're going to have just tonnes of this equipment going into the classrooms.

Intercussions.

Hon David Johnson: The member opposite congratulates on the fair funding formula, the fair funding formula which directs more resources, more funding into the classrooms.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): Like special ed.

Hon David Johnson: Like special ed, you're exactly right. More monies for special education, more monies to teachers, more monies to supply teachers, more monies to textbooks, more monies to computer software, all of these functions in the classrooms. Guidance teachers, librarians, all will have more money, more resources, right across Ontario for the school boards.

Now, I'll stand on my feet right here and now and I'll admit to the opposition parties and to the people of Ontario that there will be less money for administration. There will be less money for bureaucracy. There will be less money being spent outside the classrooms of Ontario. But you know what? On balance, when it's all added up, the total, even though there is less money for bureaucracy, less money on administration, there will be more money spent by the school boards because there is more money going into the classroom. That outweighs the reduction in administration and bureaucracy.

There will be more money spent on elementary and secondary education in Ontario this school year than ever before in any other school year in Ontario. It will be spent more wisely. It will be spent on students. It will be spent on teachers. It will be spent on improving the quality of education in Ontario.

It takes a little bit of strength and conviction and it takes teamwork, and I'm proud to be associated with a government that has had the conviction to do this, to make these changes, because certainly there has been criticism. Any time you change the status quo, it's not always popular, but we're doing it, setting a table for a better quality of education for our students in the future.

The new curriculum will not be fully implemented this fall, we all know that, but it's going to be started. Social studies, for example, was announced not long ago. The material obviously doesn't develop overnight, and coordination with the curriculum. But you know what? If I have a choice between starting a new curriculum this fall, getting it started and getting it underway and having it phased in over a period of time, if that's one choice, and another choice is to take that new curriculum which teachers have worked hard to develop, because they know it's a better product, and stick it on the shelf, as I think some

Ms Mushinski: Across the other side of the House.

Hon David Johnson: Nevertheless, we proceeded with the purchase of the textbooks at the elementary level.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):

Yes, the American textbooks.

Hon David Johnson: I will say that the books were delivered on time — the Canadian textbooks, printed right here in Canada, the whole process involving Canadians; \$68 million worth of textbooks purchased for \$55 million, a discount of about \$13 million. I might say the taxpayers of Ontario are very delighted that we've had a discount of some \$13 million.

How many books does that buy? Thousands, millions — over 3.2 million books at the elementary level going out to each and every elementary school in Ontario. That's almost three books per student.

Mr Gerretsen: What's so special about that? In what's so special —

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): The Minister of Education has the floor, Order.

Hon David Johnson: It's a very controversial question that's been posed to me from Liberal ranks: What's so special about books in our classrooms? I've been hearing from parents across Ontario that there is a totally inadequate supply of books, that students are sharing books. There's one book per classroom or maybe three books per classroom, the books are old, they're held together by duct tape, or it's simply that the resources that boards have had for textbooks have been diverted to other purchases or other events —

Ms Mushinski: Like retirement dinners.

Hon David Johnson: — or who knows where? But they have not been going to buy the books, so this is special. We're hearing back all across Ontario: "My goodness, we've new textbooks. We haven't seen new textbooks like this for a long, long time."

opposition members would want me to do, and leave it there for a year. I can tell you where my choice lies. My choice lies in getting it started and getting it into the classroom. Have it phased in if necessary, but let our kids have the opportunity to take advantage of it at the first possibility.

At the secondary level, the reforms are being initiated as well. These reforms build on the reforms in the curriculum that we have from the elementary level. As an example, the reforms in the curriculum at the elementary level will build on what we have begun at the elementary level so that the mathematics in grades 9 and 10 will flow from the mathematics we introduced last year at the elementary level up through grade 8. There will be a continuum and the one will fit hand in glove with the other. The same is true in language and all the other programs at the secondary school level.

I'm also delighted that the other initiatives at the secondary school level will take place very shortly, the extra emphasis on mathematics and languages, the basics, which parents have been saying have been lacking for many years, the requirement for a literacy test that I must say has been extremely well received across Ontario. Employers and parents say that there are too many cases where young people graduate through our system but are unable to read or write effectively. Now, for the first time, a literacy test will be introduced at the secondary level and it will be a requirement of graduation. If the student fails the literacy test, which will take place in grade 10, then there will be remedial action, and if they fail it a second time, more opportunity for remedial action. We do need our students to be literate and able to pass the literacy test as they graduate from secondary school — another quality initiative that this government has put forward.

Some of the initiatives are particularly pleasing, although they may not fit into the same category. The volunteer component, for example: I'm very pleased that we have introduced a requirement at the secondary level concerning volunteer work, some 40 hours of volunteer activity. Many of our young people would greatly exceed that today, but we want all of our young people to have the advantage of volunteer work within their communities. We want them not only to be good students, to benefit from the quality education program we are introducing, but we want our students to have the benefit of volunteering and being good citizens, not only of their community but of their province and of this fine country, Canada. We're proud to be Canadian and we want them to feel that pride through their community work.

I thought it was important to talk about a few of the quality initiatives, because we want the kids back into the classroom, we want the teachers back into the classroom because we feel we have in Ontario the breaking of a new dawn in quality, more improvements in our education system. We want our students to have the advantage of those improvements, we want our teachers to have the advantage of those improvements and we want them all back in the classroom.

1620

Perhaps with those few comments and in the spirit that we want everybody to have the opportunity to speak today and have this matter dealt with today, I will again say that if my understanding is correct and this House is prepared to deal with this matter, all three readings today, along with some committee of the whole time for some amendments, then I applaud each and every member in this House. Say what you will about me or about the Ministry of Education or this government. Put your amendments forward and they will be considered in committee of the whole. But let's have the resolve to deal with this matter today. Put the kids first. Get this matter dealt with and get the students back into the classroom.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Duncan: I want to respond to the minister by saying that he referred to what he called the new dawn. I would suggest that the darkness descended on education in September 1995, when the then minister said he wanted to create a useful crisis in education. Let's just review for a few moments what creating a crisis means.

In March 1996, this government cut \$533 million out of the education system — \$533 million by your own budget — and they also made the NDP's cut of \$425 million permanent. What did that include? That included \$231 million from operating grants and \$167 million from capital. Capital is what we use to replace portables. That's what we use to buy computers. That's what we use to buy an appropriate amount of textbooks — \$150 million from adult education, \$145 million from junior kindergarten, \$39 million from transportation.

If that wasn't enough, in September 1997, at a time when they had no money for those things, they had \$1 million for a propaganda campaign aimed at putting forward their own record, which is abysmal in education. Leaked documents at the time revealed that the government's intention was to cut a further \$667 million from education, and the list goes on and on till this year. The minister spoke of average class size. I've spoken to teachers and students and families in every school in my riding and very few of them have seen the average class sizes.

Test results: The government talks about test results improving. If you look at the test results, you'll see there's an unequal distribution of good marks. What we need are the very kinds of services this minister has cut.

We will vote in favour of this bill, but the reason there's been no school for the last few weeks is because of this government's mismanagement of education. The minister doesn't know what he's talking about.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): I'm happy to have these two minutes to respond to the minister's comments. I would remind him and everyone in this House that they've had three years of a good economy, with lots of money coming into these provincial coffers, something that we New Democrats were unlucky not to have had. But that's okay; it's a different problem that we're talking about. They're squandering all this money on the income tax cut that goes to the wealthiest Ontarians. Had they not

given money away to rich people, we would have had so much money to be so helpful in so many areas.

Mr Shea: Oh, give it up. The Liberals in Ottawa —

Mr Marchese: Please, member from High Park, would you come on this side? I can't hear you very well.

Mr Shea: Are you sure you want me to come over there?

The Acting Speaker: Member for High Park-Swansea.

Mr Marchese: Just to remind the member here, with

all this money, they have taken \$1 billion out of the educational system. Billions of dollars coming into provincial coffers as a result of the good economy, and what did these people do? They just sock away from the educational system.

What did they do through Bill 160? Bill 160 centralizes

control in the hands of this minister and this Tory government. They have taken control away from boards of education. Boards have no more power or money left to negotiate with those teachers. Yet you have the Minister of Education saying how it pains him that those negotiations haven't been able to go very well and that it hurts him to have to bring in this legislation because he would have liked to have had a different result. If you've taken complete control and boards have no more power or money to be able to negotiate with those teachers, what is left for them except very little?

We're dealing now with a bill that we have to of course deal with on the basis that we all care about kids, and we do. That's why we've negotiated this deal with this minister today.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): I commend the Minister of Education and the Premier for agreeing to change the process here, demonstrating putting students first. There's no question that's what's happened here today. Clearly I would have to comment that Mr Hampton has shown some leadership here. He's really taken the lead here and I respectfully mean that. We now know who the official opposition is, that's for sure.

My wife's a teacher and we have five children. I hear first hand that people want their kids back in school. In the last week I've been receiving over 20 calls per day in my riding of Durham East. I've visited six or seven schools in the last week. The consistent message I hear is very clear, "When are you going to get the kids back in the classroom?" Clearly this government responded. We've listened and we've taken this important step, and today I go back to the NDP's foresight in realizing putting the students first.

When I was visiting the schools and talking to people on the phone, there was one consistent message I heard in Durham. I heard it from teachers confidentially. They told me to keep Marshall Jarvis and Earl Manners out of Durham. "We want our own local solution, not a provincial union solution." They're trying to hold them in solidarity. As a teacher, my wife is being forced to work to rule. She's being forced to deny her attention to young elementary students. I know just how hard it is on many of the

teachers I speak to. They really are unwilling partners in this almost conspiracy to bring the government to task. I go back to what the minister was saying. Clearly our goals are for putting the student first, quality and excellence in education. Just look at our curriculum. Look at the report card. Look at the standard testing. Putting students first is a —

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Curling: It's rather passing strange that this government comes into the House today and behaves like it wants so much on behalf of children. They sat around. You saw the minister fold his arms many times on resolving this matter. He could have done it a long time ago and he waited until September 28, when he felt that somehow he had listened to the people, after he had bullied them through the process — a typical of this government — harassed the teachers all through the process, had bullied the principals, had bullied the vice-principals, and then he went around announcing today with great smiles how many textbooks he has produced.

Ask the teachers, when did they ask them to have some input into this matter? A very limited time. They dropped this at their door and said, "Distribute it." You ask those teachers what kind of relationship they have with this minister, or any of the ministers from this bullying government, who come about in every way to make a terrible confrontation and then want to come with a smiling face, saying they feel somehow happy with what they have done.

Let me tell you, many of the parents today are not happy with what's going on. They feel this government has completely lost touch with reality. They feel that brute force is the way to go and they feel so awed with this power. But thanks to the democrat process, when the time comes for a reckoning, they will throw you out just like they threw out Mulroney and all those others like that before.

The fact is that when I speak to the teachers, they have no kind words for this kind of government. Furthermore, when I speak to the children, they seem to understand this issue. They are more concerned about this. They spoke so loudly — 40,000 in unison booed the Premier, not for education but for all the bullying things he's been doing.

1630

The Acting Speaker: Minister, you have two minutes. Hon David Johnson: Just to wrap up, I think the member for Durham East for his comments. I think he summarized the matter quite well.

I would say to the members for Windsor-Walkerville and Fort York that I'll attempt to have you take advantage of the new curriculum in mathematics.

Mr Shea: Remedial mathematics.

Hon David Johnson: Remedial mathematics, because I assure you that the amount of money spent in elementary and secondary for this school year will be above and beyond any monies ever spent in any other year in elementary and secondary.

Mr Shea: Where's your math, guys?

Hon David Johnson: The question is, where's your math, guys? I think the answer is you really don't care about the math; that's an inconvenient fact that I'm sure you all greatly ignore, as you have in the past.

It's not hard to figure it out. There has been over \$13 billion in the grant which has been guaranteed. Throw on top of that the textbook purchase; throw on top of that some \$200 million in telecommunications; throw on top of that special education; throw on top of that extra money that was doled out to ensure class sizes were maintained, and on and on, and what will be spent in Ontario in elementary and secondary is pretty close to \$15 billion over the next year.

I will say again, we have reduced the amounts of money going into administration and bureaucracy and all this extra money is going into the classrooms to improve the education system. If the opposition parties don't like that, if they prefer the money going into bureaucracy and administration, well, good, carry on with your statements, because we'll fight for the classrooms of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Further debate?

Mrs McLeod: Madam Speaker, I ask to share whatever time I leave with my colleagues from Sudbury and Hamilton East.

I would love to use my time to shed some light of reality on some of the comments the Minister of Education has just made about educational issues in general, but I intend to direct my comments specifically to this unprecedented piece of legislation, which is before the House this afternoon.

I want to make it clear at the outset that the minister used the term that he was glad to see the opposition parties would now be behind the bill. Let me make it absolutely clear: We cannot be behind a piece of legislation introduced in the way this legislation was introduced and which is still setting incredibly dangerous precedents in the nature of the legislation and the back-to-work rulings that it makes.

We will expedite the hearings of this bill, the debates on this bill, knowing that the government intends to use its considerable majority to pass this bill, hoping that perhaps, since we have some debate time, there will be some consideration given to the amendments we will put forward, although I am doubtful because I believe the government has chosen to use this back-to-work legislation as a way of advancing an agenda that it has been pursuing for the last three years. But we are not behind a bad piece of legislation.

If by some remarkable feat the government were to actually look at our amendments, then we would feel happier about the nature of the legislation, but we could still not condone the way in which it was introduced.

The minister began his comments by saying that this is an issue which doesn't involve politics. I wish for the sake of the 200,000 children who have been out of school that it was not an issue involving politics, because if it were not involving politics this government could have acted in a way which previous governments faced with strike or

lockout situations have acted and brought in a piece of back-to-work legislation that was honest and fair. It would still have been the most complicated back-to-work legislation we had ever seen, because we have a situation of unprecedented chaos, but they could at least, if their goal was to get kids back in school, have brought in a piece of back-to-work legislation which was consistent with the past practice and precedent of this House and which would undoubtedly then have had the consent of all parties to proceed, as back-to-work legislation has had in the past.

That is not what this government chose to do. They chose not to wait for the Education Relations Commission ruling on jeopardy. They chose not to bring in back-to-work legislation which was to have teachers back in school, kids back in the class, and a fair and reasonable arbitration process. They permitted contract-stripping and they went even beyond that and provided a part II of the bill which had nothing to do with the back-to-work legislation, which was essentially the son of Bill 160, one of the things they didn't make clear enough when they did their Bill 160 and which they intended to bring forward today as part of back-to-work legislation, a piece of legislation which in fact would have served to advance the government's agenda in its Bill 160 even further.

I'm glad there was agreement to at least set part II of the bill aside so we can have some further debate on what the government is doing with this sequel to Bill 160. Nevertheless, we are faced with a piece of back-to-work legislation, minus part II, which is still unprecedented, both in the way in which it was introduced and the scope of issues with which it deals and with the specifics of the arbitration process which is established.

What I want to do is deal with the many ways in which this legislation that we are debating today is completely unprecedented. It is unprecedented first of all in that it follows a creation of chaos that is indeed totally unlike anything this province has ever seen before. As my colleagues have said in different forms this afternoon, it is the Hartt's government which sets out deliberately to create a crisis, to bankrupt the system, to create the kinds of conditions which have nothing to do with the well-being of students or the quality of the teaching and learning environment, but to bankrupt the system and create the conditions which would allow them to impose their agenda, what the previous Minister of Education called transformational change — exclusively in the direction that the Hartt's government wants to set for its primarily cost-cutting and public relations purposes.

I think we have to remember that this is the government that took control over all of education, all of the conditions including all of the funding. It was also the government that declared null and void as of September 1 every collective agreement between every school board and every employee group. Whether the boards were amalgamated or not, the agreements were considered to be null and void. Let's remember that this back-to-work legislation which deals with eight boards is just the beginning of what

this government is going to have to do to deal with the chaos in collective bargaining that it has created. We still have the vast majority of boards without agreements with either the elementary or secondary school teachers, and we have all of the non-teaching contracts where negotiations have not even begun. How many pieces of back-to-work legislation is this House going to be dealing with because of the chaotic conditions this government has created, the kinds of conditions that make it virtually impossible without, again, unprecedented efforts on the part of both teachers and boards at a local level to reach a local agreement?

This legislation is unprecedented because, for the first time, we're seeing local negotiations attempted under conditions that have been imposed by the central government with funding that is completely and totally controlled by the central government. The government has set all the rules. They control all the strings. Then they turn to teachers and boards, the very people the Premier said only months ago couldn't be trusted with quality education. They've turned over the dirty work of actually trying to make these conditions work in reaching an agreement.

The boards, I understand, have found it difficult to know what to agree to, let alone what to offer at a collective bargaining table, because in many cases the boards don't even know the real funding situation. They may know what it is for year one, they may feel somewhat comfortable with their funding in year two, but board after board across this province is saying, "We don't believe we can reach an agreement, because we don't know what our funding will be in year two." Why don't they reach an agreement for one year? Because the government set a rule, Bill 160: Any agreement that is reached that is a one-year agreement is automatically deemed to be a two-year agreement.

Do you know how many boards are out there prepared to sign one-year agreements based on what they know about the funding that this government is prepared to give them but are reluctant to sign an agreement that will be deemed to be a two-year agreement because they don't know what their funding will be in year two? Talk about an impossible condition for local agreements to be reached.

We then have a further unprecedented situation, as if it isn't already getting complicated enough. Government controls all the conditions, government makes all the rules, government controls all the funding, and the government isn't even very forthcoming in terms of the amount of funding that the boards are going to get, particularly in year two. Then we have an unprecedented degree of intervention on the part of the central government in the local negotiation process.

I know the Minister of Education has said again today that he's not involved in any way in the collective bargaining. He's not physically present at the table, but what would you call a letter that comes out from the Minister of Education that suggests he is going to bring in legislation somewhere down the road that will clarify the central

issue that is of debate at that collective bargaining table? Talk about confusion.

Do you know how many boards were on the verge of being able to reach an agreement with their teachers until the minister sent a letter that said: "At some point in the future I'm going to bring in another piece of legislation which will set new terms and conditions, change all the rules once more. And don't forget, I'm the person with the money, so if you happen to have reached an agreement and it doesn't fit with the legislation I'm going to bring in somewhere down the road, you board members are going to be left with a deficit, and that's not legal"? Talk about intervention in a way which is totally inexplicable.

Then we have a different kind of intervention; we have the intervention of government advertising. Anybody who doesn't think that the kind of advertising this government has been doing throughout the negotiating process is a direct intervention in the efforts to reach local bargaining has no idea of the difficult circumstances under which boards and teachers have been trying to reach agreements. I think in most cases in good faith, have been sitting down and trying to work through.

In the tensions of that collective bargaining effort, we have the government, in its total lack of wisdom or lack of concern, deciding that it will have the Premier on television talking about the failure of the system. The minister was anxious today to clarify the fact that the Premier only talks about the failure of the system, he's not really teacher-bashing. I don't know how you can talk about the failure of the system when the teachers feel responsible for the quality of the system and not think you're teacher-bashing.

If they want to say that the Premier wasn't teacher-bashing when he went on television, right at the most critical point in collective bargaining procedures, that he wasn't teacher-bashing at that point, how would you explain the clock ad that started to run this weekend, an ad that is so distorting of the work of teachers, so misrepresentative of what teachers do in our schools, and an ad which directly impacts on the most controversial issue at the bargaining table? Clearly that ad has nothing to do with getting a resolution at the local level. It certainly provides no information. If the government waited to provide information that would help in the bargaining situation, they might have provided it for the parties at the bargaining table.

This was purely and simply a public relations effort. I suggest that this government, from beginning to end and I'm afraid well into the future, is always and only concerned about politics. The disruption of school for so many students has been turned by this government to its political advantage. At least they've attempted to do that by using advertising like the clock ad to further demoralize and demean the work of teachers in order to advance the government's agenda.

This government could have taken positive measures to support local settlements. We have proposals that could have been taken forward, immediate steps that would have

helped to get local agreements. The government could have abandoned this requirement that every contract be a two-year agreement. There are boards and teachers that would want to reach two-year agreements, and that should happen. Who wants to be back at the bargaining table again under these circumstances? But there are other boards that were rightly saying: "We don't know what our funding will be in year two. We'd like at least to avoid the disruption of a strike. Let us have a one-year agreement." There are in fact a number of one-year protocols out there that are allowing teachers to be in their classrooms today which may be invalidated by the legislation that's before us now.

The government — the minister — could have given an assurance that in the sequel to Bill 160 he was not going to mandate that every teacher would teach seven out of eight classes, which would virtually destroy extracurricular activities and which again is a central concern at the bargaining table.

The minister could have looked at some of the very real problems that some boards with large enrolments are having in implementing the average class size because of a lack of physical space and because of the restriction on capital provision for new schools that this government has imposed. There could have been some phase-in that would have allowed boards and teachers to reach an agreement. In fact, there was one agreement proposed along those lines and the Minister of Education said, "No, sorry, there's no flexibility around the rules we've put in place."

Most important of all in the long term, if this government wants any kind of sanity, if they're concerned at all to create the conditions for teaching and learning that would be good for students, they will undertake an immediate review of a funding formula which has been seen to be arbitrary, to have been put together too quickly, which has been shown to have no concern for the impact on quality of education. Take the statements of Justice Cumming, the only independent individual who has been given access to volumes of testimony about the real impact of the funding formula on students in the classroom, who has said that for some boards in Ontario, if they are to implement the government's rules in Bill 160, with the government's limitations on funding, they will have to cannibalize the rest of their educational system.

How do boards and teachers sit down at a bargaining table and engage in concessions bargaining? Because that's what we're talking about. Teachers aren't out there looking for financial increases. We're talking about what people have to give up to live within this government's funding. How do they reach agreements that would cannibalize their education system? In good conscience, how do they do that?

Not just to get past this immediate crisis, but to see some long-term health restored to our education system, there must be an immediate and independent review of the funding formula so there can be some agreement on what will actually work for students in the classroom when it comes to dollars.

I'm not optimistic that the government will agree to any of this. They wouldn't agree to it in the past. They haven't shown any willingness to create positive conditions for reaching local agreements. I don't think the government is prepared to do this because they just might find that they can't sustain their cost-cutting agenda. When the public finds, as Justice Cumming suggests, that the education system would have to be cannibalized to live within this government's funding restrictions, the public might say: "Wait a minute, you said there weren't going to be any more cuts to education. Why are we having to cannibalize our education system? Why are we having to strip services and programs away from students?" The government might find it couldn't sustain the public pressure of people saying, "We want something more for our students." It's so much easier for the government to create all the rules, control all the dollars and then tell boards and teachers to go out and find some way of solving this impossible situation.

Instead, again, we have the government washing its hands of any responsibility for the chaos it has created, but not hesitating, as the Premier did with the chamber of commerce, from going forward and, in the midst of all of this tension, bashing teachers and the educational system. The Premier gained a standing ovation that day from the people at the chamber of commerce luncheon. He gained nothing in terms of an improvement in the quality of education for our students. Our teachers felt further demoralized. I ask, how can teachers provide quality education? How can they pick up on that curriculum the minister keeps talking about — the only thing the government comes back to in terms of what they might have done for education — how can teachers implement that curriculum when they are so demoralized because they have a Premier and a minister and a government that are constantly demeaning and devaluing their work?

If this legislation is unprecedented in the degree of government intervention we've seen, it is also unprecedented because it deals with eight boards at once. Now that's clearly a measure of the sheer chaos that the government has created. We're actually, I suppose, somewhat fortunate that there are only eight boards, because there could well be 70 boards being dealt with in this back-to-work legislation, times two — elementary and secondary school contracts. As I suggested earlier, this is just the beginning of what we may see with back-to-work legislation because the bulk of contracts are not yet settled. Never before has there been back-to-work legislation that affects eight boards at once.

We're going to have eight separate arbitrations. That I think is actually preferable to having a single arbitrated settlement which would be imposed on all eight boards and would clearly become the model then for the imposition of the Harris government's social contract. Instead of having a new social contract coming from a different government, we are instead going to have the chaos of eight different arbitrated settlements. Again, I suggest this is just the beginning.

There is, I believe, no incentive in this legislation — in fact, just the opposite; there is a disincentive, given this legislation — for boards and teachers to reach local agreements. The boards have been given unilateral powers to set working conditions for the period of the arbitration. Clearly that is a financial benefit to boards because they don't have to hire the staff that would be required to maintain current staffing levels. They can put different working conditions in place and they can therefore hire less staff and save some money. That guarantees that boards are going to be under pressure not to reach local agreements to change the working conditions, to strip the contracts and to let the government bring in back-to-work legislation and get an arbitrated settlement.

It would take an incredibly courageous board, a tremendously committed board of education to take the risk now of sitting down and actually negotiating contracts with their teachers. I hope it will happen, and I will have great admiration for those jurisdictions where they can still sit down after this legislation and attempt to work out good local agreements under conditions that have become even more complex and more restrictive than they were before.

It will take courage on the part of boards because, on the one hand, they have been given unilateral powers to strip contracts for a period of time if they don't settle, and, on the other hand, they know that they have the hammer of this government's funding hanging over their heads. If they should settle for something which the minister in his wisdom somewhere down the way decides is too rich for his blood, the boards will not be given enough money to fund. It's going to be very difficult not to simply do what this government is asking boards to do, and that's to be the enforcers of the government's dictatorial policies.

I hope that will not be the case, because I really believe good local agreements are infinitely preferable to arbitrated agreements, certainly preferable to the kind of chaotic arbitrations we're going to see under this legislation, and I will speak a little bit more to that. It's also preferable to have good local agreements reached because it does something for the continued relationship between the teachers and the trustees who are going to manage that educational system in the future under all of the circumstances the government has created.

I wonder, if you get dictatorial policies being enforced by the trustees because they feel they have no choice, what that does to the willingness of teachers to go all of the extra miles that teachers go in the course of their working day. I wonder whether teachers are going to feel they might as well just work those four hours and 10 minutes of a teacher's day. When the Premier accuses them of working only that amount of time, I can understand why teachers will say, "If that's what he's going to tell the world, if that's what the Premier thinks of us, then maybe that's what we'll actually do." I don't think teachers will take that step, because despite everything this government has done to dump on them and demoralize them, teachers

Of even greater concern than the confusion for me is the issue of what's been left out of the definition of instructional time in this part II. What's been left out are all of the things that teachers have to do to prepare for their classes, all the things they have to do in terms of preparation of materials as well as the development of their lesson plans, all that they have to do in terms of the marking of papers if there really is going to be that high standard of evaluation that the government likes to talk about, all of the time that teachers spend counselling students, all of the time they spend doing individual remediation work, tutorial work, with students. That's all left out. You can teach

People must know that the question of the definition of instructional time is the issue of how much of what a teacher does and must do in their work with students is included in the definition of instructional time. The way in which part II of the legislation, which is now going to be considered separately, is worded raises all kinds of questions. There will be legal considerations — that's one of the reasons why it simply could not have been passed at the drop of a hat — as to what it does to existing agreements, as to what's going to happen in the future. Are existing agreements that have been reached going to be forced to change by this, or are we going to have two categories of teachers: those who were before this clarification of instructional time, who reached agreements before this clarification, and those whose agreements are reached after?

I come back to the minister's letter where he said he was going to achieve his definition of "instructional time" — the ministry's agenda, the government's agenda — in two steps. I think part II of this bill as it was originally presented is really just step one, and we've yet to see step two.

The minister says it removes any shadow of doubt. Maybe the minister hasn't read what is now a new bill defining "instructional time" and hasn't noticed the clause where it says that the Minister of Education, by regulation, can change the definition of "instructional time" in any way that he chooses at any time in the future. That is hardly removing the shadow of doubt as to what "instructional time" means.

The Minister of Education has said today that part II of the legislation, which clarifies further the definition of "instructional time," removes any shadow of doubt about what "instructional time" means. This legislation is unprecedented in that it goes so far beyond back-to-work legislation for the boards where there are strikes and lockouts. Part II of the legislation as the government introduced it today applied to every single board in the province, totally inappropriate in back-to-work legislation and definitely not the place to be debating a central issue of concern, not only in terms of the bargaining situation at the local table, but a central issue of concern in terms of what our secondary schools are going to look like in the future.

are committed to their students and they're going to continue to go the extra mile.

a remedial class, but tutorial work with students is no longer part of a teacher's instructional time according to the legislation the government has presented today.

Certainly the extracurricular activities are not part of a teacher's instructional time. Teachers aren't asking that extracurricular activities be part of their instructional time. They're simply asking that their workload be such that they have enough time in the evenings and after school to commit to the extracurricular activities that every high school student will tell you are an integral part of a full high school curriculum.

Part II of the legislation is here — fortunately now removed for at least further debate — because the government saw a way of using its back-to-work legislation as a means of taking its agenda further, because the definition of instructional time is purely and simply about cutting teachers. From the very beginning, this government's goal has been to take \$1 billion out of education. That's a goal they've achieved, and their goal was to do it by cutting teachers. The definition of instructional time, or sure that boards would be cutting teachers so that they could cut their costs and so that the government's funding formula would fit because there would be fewer teachers in our schools.

The government's goal originally was to cut 10,000 teachers out of our secondary schools. Because they did make some slight modifications under the public pressure of Bill 160, cut back a little bit on their original intention, the expectation is that what's now in Bill 160 would cost us about 7,500 teachers. There are boards across this province who are saying: "We don't want to cannibalize our education system by cutting that many teachers. We're prepared to look at other ways of living within the government's funding formula in order to avoid losing teachers and losing the programs and services to students that those teachers are providing."

This government clearly wanted to make sure that boards couldn't find any other ways. They were going to cut those teachers and this government's agenda was going to be upheld no matter what. They were going to bring in legislation that would strengthen the enforcement role of the school trustees and, if that failed, the enforcement role of arbitrators. There's no question that this will be a subject of debate when part II of the legislation comes forward as a separate bill.

But let's be absolutely clear about why the government chose to bring it in today. They didn't need to do that. They could have split this bill off. They didn't need to do it in the beginning. They could have split it off before the weekend, as our leader had suggested. They could have split it off before today, knowing that they would not get unanimous consent to a bill that included something which they saw this as their chance, under the cover of wanting to put students back in the classroom, which we would all support, to further advance their agenda of cutting more teachers out of our secondary school system.

I'm not going to take the time to itemize the job losses we've already had. The sad reality is that although the government has had to moderate its cutting of teachers slightly, and although some boards have reached agreements which avoid the cutting of teachers, the reality of the government's funding is that we are seeing teacher job losses in board after board across the province, and that will be a subject of concern in future days.

1700

I want to draw the attention of the Legislature to something that is unprecedented in part I of the bill which will be brought forward for second and third reading today. It is unprecedented in the way in which it limits the ability of the arbitrator to make rulings awards in each of these eight situations. The arbitrator is constrained in a number of ways under section 17 of the bill, which we will be proposing be deleted entirely because we don't believe that arbitrators should be in any way constrained. If it's to be a fair and honest arbitration process, the arbitrator should be able to go in, and in his or her wisdom and judgment and knowing all of the facts, make the best award that is considered to be fair and reasonable. But that wouldn't be good enough for the government. They don't want to trust public sector arbitrators to actually go in and make fair and honest independent awards. So they've brought in section 17 of this bill which limits and constrains what an arbitrator can do.

I have some concern there is some legal lack of clarity in whether or not the arbitrator is able to make awards that relate to teachers' instructional time. They are not able to make any awards about the scheduling of students' instructional time, that's clear, but it seems less clear whether or not that affects the teachers' instructional time. That gets too complex for me to spend a lot of time on. Suffice it to say that we would like to see section 17 eliminated along with that particular constraint.

It's important that I help people understand why this is so unprecedented and so sweeping and so impossible in its scope. Each of these eight arbitrators is to go into each of these separate boards and is to make a decision about not just salaries and benefits, because that is rarely an issue at the table, but essentially the way in which programs are delivered to students, and the amount of teachers' instructional time is one of the issues in terms of delivery of programs to students. Class sizes are other aspects of the issue the arbitrator will have to look at, virtually the whole gamut of the program. They have to do that and they have to make sure that any award fits Bill 160, which is of course the law of the land and we all recognize that. But beyond that, they must make sure that any award will not leave the board in a deficit position.

We know this government has introduced ability to pay as the criterion for arbitrators. We know public sector arbitrators have said they cannot work with that kind of limitation and it's going to be very difficult to get arbitrators who will ever be prepared to enter into these arbitrations. But this takes ability to pay a step further because this is saying the board must not run a deficit as a result of the arbitrator's award.

How does the arbitrator make this decision? We have schools in every board that are slated for closure. Boards are wrestling with those decisions now. Why are they slated for closure? Because the government has restricted the amount of space they're prepared to fund and the amount of money they're prepared to give boards to keep them clean and light the space. So boards are looking at closing schools. They know that if they don't close schools, they don't have enough money to pay the other bills. That's the position the government has put them in. The money was cut off on September 1. They're already in a deficit situation, trying to keep the school space that they now have heated and lit and clean.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour): Read the bill.

Mrs McLeod: Read the bill indeed, I say to Mr Flaherty, because your arbitrators must look at ability to pay and the ability of the board to run a deficit.

I would ask the government members opposite, since the government members are so anxious to be part of the debate — unfortunately the minister didn't give them a chance to be part of it — what happens if an arbitrator goes in and looks at ability to pay and under ability to pay says, "You know what, this board can't afford to pay for what I consider to be a fair and reasonable settlement?" What does the arbitrator do then?

He's constrained by this legislation. He's got to bring in an award that fits the government's rules and he's got to bring in an award that doesn't let the board run a deficit. So what does the arbitrator do then? Does he come back to the government and say, "Government, you're the funder. You're the one that controls the ability to pay. You're the one that's going to have to ante up for a fair and reasonable settlement?" If the arbitrator has that kind of freedom, then you might get a fair and reasonable arbitration. But that's not the way this legislation has been written.

Madam Speaker, very quickly: This legislation is unprecedented because it allows the boards to strip contracts, at least during the term of the arbitration. This is something this government has tried to do for some time now, totally unprecedented in the way in which back-to-work legislation has ever been brought into this House before. Always in the past back-to-work legislation had been based on teachers returning to the classrooms on the terms

and conditions of the previous agreement. This government has said, "You can return on the terms and conditions of the previous agreement as far as salary and benefits are concerned, but when it comes to working conditions, the issue where we're pushing our cost cutting and our teacher cutting, the boards can strip the contracts." They were prepared to recognize the precedent of existing contracts as the basis for return to school when it came to salaries and benefits but not when it came to the central theme of their cost-cutting agenda.

I suggest this government tried to bring in contract stripping when Lennox and Addington teachers had been out on strike, and when they were bringing in back-to-work legislation, they tried to bring in contract stripping. We said then, "We cannot give unanimous consent to any back-to-work legislation that involves contract stripping," and the government at the last minute withdrew the contract stripping. They decided this time, because it was so mammoth, so chaotic, they could get away with what they've tried to do before, and it appears, given their majority, they will succeed, in spite of the amendment that we'll be proposing.

They also made an unprecedented step in deciding to bring in legislation before the Education Relations Commission had ruled on jeopardy. The Education Relations Commission, as the minister acknowledged, was monitoring very closely what was happening to students —

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs McLeod: The Education Relations Commission was the one part of Bill 100 that was left in Bill 160.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Durham Centre, come to order.

Mrs McLeod: This isn't board legislation; this is the government's legislation that they supposedly duly considered and they left in the Education Relations Commission to monitor collective bargaining situations and to rule when students were in jeopardy under a strike or lockout situation. We know the Education Relations Commission was carrying out that role conscientiously. We believe they were very close indeed to ruling on jeopardy in at least one or two of these situations, but the government couldn't wait for that. Why, Madam Speaker, is an unanswered question. Why would the government insist on moving ahead immediately without waiting those few hours in order to have their own law fully implemented as a framework for collective bargaining?

I find myself wondering if this is the end of local collective bargaining in Ontario because it becomes meaningless if the government controls all the conditions, intervenes at will, as this government has indirectly. But I don't think that what this government wants is total centralized control, because I don't think this government wants the responsibility of living with the result of having total centralized control. They want to set all the rules and control all the dollars, and they want the trustees and teachers to take the fall for trying to work under these impossible conditions. They will be happy, therefore, with

for the work that is done by teachers in the province of

Ontario.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I want to thank my colleague from Fort William, our education critic, for allowing some time for a couple of members of our caucus to speak on this bill as well.

My colleague from Fort William has outlined very clearly the serious flaws in this legislation and the motivation of this government in bringing in such flawed legislation at this time. I come at this from the perspective of a member whose community has had 9,000 high school students locked out for almost three weeks. Having spent seven years as a school trustee, I certainly understand clearly the difficulties the board is facing.

It is clear that what we see here in front of us today has been caused by this government. This is a crisis that could have been avoided. This was a dilemma that could have been resolved, had this government not decided that they were going to attack public education. The agenda from day one was an attack on public education. You attacked it by cutting over a billion dollars from the funding of education in this province; you attacked it by bringing in draconian pieces of legislation with regard to education funding in Ontario, with regard to trying to control education in this province. What you have done today is force an educational crisis that we have not seen before and is unprecedented in the history of the province. It was not necessary to be where we are now.

I believe that in my own community the school board was wrong in locking out the teachers. However, this province, this government, this Minister of Education have been wrong and in my view seriously flawed in how they have approached education funding in Ontario, particularly this ongoing attack on teachers. This government decided they were going to make teachers the enemy. This government decided from day one that they could score some cheap, sleazy political points by attacking the individuals who are responsible for delivering the education system in this province. You have not been constructive; you have basically been destructive in your approach.

You do not get a better education system by cutting out a billion dollars, you don't get a better system by ensuring that a few bureaucrats and a few senior staffers in the Premier's office control the education system in Ontario, and you don't get a better education system by bashing the individuals who are responsible for delivering quality education in Ontario.

You've attacked them through the Premier. You've attacked them through the millions of dollars you have spent on government advertising. The latest insult came about a week and a half ago. In the middle of this work stoppage throughout the province, you went ahead and spent another \$700,000 telling parents the wonderful job you're doing when it comes to public education, those same parents whose kids were not in school as a result of your actions, as a result of what you have done.

This bill that was introduced last week had more to do with attempting to embarrass the opposition than it had to do with getting the kids back into the classroom. It was not

made arbitrators responsible for the fallout if these awards simply don't work.

I just want to conclude because I know I have col-

leagues who wish to speak. The amazing thing over the last weeks, despite all of the complexity, all of the new rules that aren't understood, all of the government intervention, the craziness of trying to reach local agreements when there's no local funding source other than what the government provides, is that agreements were being reached. It's quite phenomenal that there were any agreements reached under these circumstances. The fact that there were is a reflection of the commitment to local bargaining, the hard work and the willingness to make sacrifices on the part of both parties, boards and teachers.

They needed some flexibility, and at one point Marshall Jarvis of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association actually praised the Minister of Education for allowing some local flexibility that made one local agreement possible. That was before he became totally discouraged by the minister's arbitrary intervention which prohibited other agreements from going ahead.

The public boards and teachers felt that some real progress was being made on the negotiating front, but since this legislation was introduced at least one board has pulled out of the negotiating process altogether.

We will be proposing amendments to the legislation which we believe would set in place at least some reasonable process of arbitration, in the hope that there could be awards that would work for students in the classroom over the long term. We hope that the government would recognize that this back-to-work legislation or future back-to-work legislation which we may see will not solve any of the real issues that are limiting the ability of teachers to implement real measures to improve the quality of education in our classrooms.

This legislation is consistent with the government's approach of teacher-bashing and system-bashing so that they can cut their costs by cutting teachers. I think it guarantees we're going to continue to have chaos and demoralized teachers. It solves no problems at the bargaining table. It certainly solves no problems — in fact it creates greater problems — in terms of the atmosphere for effective teaching and learning in our classrooms. We will not have good teaching and learning conditions until we have a funding formula that works for students truly in a fair way, until we have some local flexibility so there can be really good local agreements that respond to local priorities. We won't have conditions for effective teaching and learning until the government comes to have some respect

necessary to bring in such a wide-sweeping, 17-page bill that seriously changed many parts of the Education Act. It was not necessary but you were more concerned about political gamesmanship and blame than you were about getting the kids back to school. You could have brought in a very simple bill. You were forced today, and embarrassed by the opposition, to back off your position, to move away from that 17-page bill and deal with the back-to-work legislation.

We as an opposition party — our leader Dalton McGuinty has made it very clear — oppose this bill. It is fundamentally flawed. However, we are not going to be obstructionist. We believe kids belong in the classroom. The kids believe they should be back in school; the parents and the teachers believe it. They don't want to be on the picket line. They don't want to be out there. They want to be in the classroom. They want to be on the football field coaching. They don't want to be out there walking a picket line, often in situations where they have been locked out and have not chosen to go out on strike.

I go back to what is driving all this. Why do the Premier and this government hate teachers so much? Why do you continue to mislead the people of Ontario through your advertising and public attacks, to somehow suggest that teachers work three hours a day and this is only about another 15 minutes? Why don't you tell the people of Ontario about the prep time that is involved in getting ready to teach a class? Why don't you tell the people of Ontario about the time teachers take to mark tests and exams and essays and book reports, and every other assignment they give students? Why don't you tell the people of Ontario how many hours teachers put in after school, on the football field, on the basketball court, on drama, on the stage or every other aspect in which they get involved in helping kids? Why don't you tell them about quality education in Ontario?

Parents are not going to be fooled. They're not going to buy your argument. They're not going to attack on teachers. They know what you've done. They've experienced the libraries with no librarians because the boards can't afford to staff them. They've experienced the textbooks that have been held together by tape and glue because boards can't afford to buy new ones. They understand the large classrooms. They know who's to blame for that. They understand the crisis we had last year and this year in the education system. They know who to blame for that. It is the government of this province. You're not going to fool them. Your public relations campaigns and your millions of dollars of advertising are not going to fool parents, but what is more disturbing and dangerous is that it is not improving quality education in this province.

When you have a Premier who stands up in front of a group of business leaders and attacks students, teachers and the educational institutions in this province by saying they're inadequate and that our graduates are inadequate, how does that help? How does it help sell Ontario? How does it help us make a better province to invest in and create jobs in when the man who is responsible for build-

The reason we are there, and we have some of the best skilled and trained people in the world in this province today, is because of the work of teachers and school boards and previous governments of all political stripes who understood how to improve education in this province, but more importantly because of the parents and the students over the years who have dedicated themselves and have worked very hard. That is why we have the workforce, the education and the skills in this province despite what the Premier would like us to believe, that we are not adequate or good enough.

1720

Frankly, what is happening here today with this bill is a step backwards. It's another attack. Unfortunately the wounds that have been opened — as professional as teachers are, they're going to go back to the classroom tomorrow morning or the next day once this bill is passed — are going to be difficult to heal. You don't continue to kick people in the head, treat them like second-class citizens, attack their integrity, attack their professionalism, attack the core they stand for, why they go into teaching. You don't heal those wounds simply by sledging the hammer of government over their head and saying, "You are going to be forced back into the classrooms."

There are fundamental issues of underfunding, of larger classes, of less textbooks, of less supplies, of less computers, of inadequate buildings. They're not going to be solved as a result of you today ramming through a piece of legislation that is going to force teachers back to the classroom tomorrow. What I suggest this government do is take a step back and work with the parents, the teachers and the school boards. There is a better way of achieving results than what you are proposing here today. You're not fooling the teachers, the parents or the students by what you're doing here. You're simply hurting and destroying public education.

Maybe that is the aim of the Premier, to destroy public education so that some day he can stand up and try to bring in an American-style system, bring in private schools, voucher systems, that will destroy the system we have built over the last 125 years in this province. I urge this government to listen to what's going on out there, get their heads out of the clouds and get on with the real job of providing education.

I'm happy to leave the rest of my time for my colleague Mr. Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Members of the

House, as we round off our first hour of debate, I would like to bring a perspective — it's called the Sudbury perspective — to this debate. I would like to thank the member for Fort William, our education critic, and the member from Hamilton who have really outlined what the crux of

the problems are with regard to the educational policies of the Mike Harris government. But I'd like to talk about Sudbury for a little while and try to outline to you across the way and to the third party, but also to the people of Ontario who are watching, how negative an impression the Mike Harris government has left with regard to education and the future of our children and students in Ontario.

Sudbury was the first board to go on strike. It started on September 1. They are still out on strike. It didn't take the people in Sudbury long to rally the troops, teachers included. We wanted a quick resolution to the strike. We gave a simple solution to Mike Harris and to Dave Johnson, the Premier and the Minister of Education, "You can repair the problem by repairing the funding formula."

This wasn't the first time members of the opposition had said this to the Mike Harris government, but it was probably the first time that a lot of parents from Sudbury said it to the government. It was probably the first time that a lot of students said it to the government. It was probably the first time that there was unanimity of thought at least with the board and the teachers in that the problem was the funding formula. But did Mike Harris and the Tory government listen? The answer is categorically no. What we saw happen in Sudbury we saw escalate across Ontario. It was a problem that could have been dealt with very adequately and very properly by listening to what teachers, to what parents, to what trustees and, most of all, to what students were saying.

I wrote a letter to David Johnson early on in the strike asking for his intervention, as did countless numbers of parents, teachers and students, to no avail. I wrote Mike Harris and asked him to delay his trip to Malaysia and China, to allow that bid to go ahead with Morley Kells, the guy he appointed to be chair of the Olympic bid proposal. He wrote back and said, "No way." He wanted to go to Malaysia and China. All of these are indicators of what he really felt and how serious he was about solving the problems in Sudbury, because he had addressed the problems in Sudbury, he wouldn't have had the problems he has across Ontario.

Interjection

Mr Bartolucci: The Minister of Labour makes idly silly comments that make absolutely no sense and do not enhance the debate, and the people of Ontario should know that that's happening.

He didn't listen to the people of Sudbury. He didn't listen to the students across northern Ontario, especially in Nickel Belt and Sudbury. He didn't listen to the parents in Sudbury. But they brought the entire Tory caucus to Sudbury because they wanted to make an impression. Immediately the high school teachers tried to seize the opportunity to get a meeting with him. It didn't happen. He wouldn't do it. The parents tried to get a meeting with the Minister of Education. It didn't happen. He wouldn't do it. The students who were out of school tried to get a meeting with the minister and the Premier. It didn't happen. They wouldn't do it. I suggest to you that all of a sudden, at the last hour, a meeting with the York parents

convinced the minister and the Premier that it was time to

I think my niece who is in grade 7 answered it best when her mother said, "What made him act all of a sudden?" She said: "Ma, haven't you seen the ads on television? It's all about the plan Mike Harris has for education in Ontario." That's an observation from a grade 7 student. I think it is pretty telling when a grade 7 student will see through the sham of the Harris government. I suggest to you that's a very sad commentary on the approach Mike Harris wants to use with regard to education.

Let me talk for a very short period of time about two different people. One of them happens to be my brother, Chris Bartolucci, who is a teacher at St Charles College, who for 23 years has gone into his school at approximately 7:15 in the morning, and because he believes in coaching kids, doesn't normally come home until about 7:30 or 8 o'clock at night. During that time he heads up a department. He works very hard for kids. He believes in Catholic education. He believes in education. He believes that children are important.

This year, for the first time in 23 years, he wasn't able to coach football because of Mike Harris's inability to fix a problem that could have been and should have been addressed at the time of drafting legislation, Bill 160. He tells me there's a good possibility that some of the kids he would have been coaching will miss out on scholarships to other universities this year because they weren't able to take part in extracurricular activities, thanks to Mike Harris. There is a major difficulty with those students who haven't been able to take part in extracurricular activities. There is an example of a good teacher who is being punished by poor educational policy.

Let me talk to you about a student. I will call here Tijana, that's her first name. What's happened to Tijana, in talking with her mother, is that she's turned off of the process. She has no respect left for board employees or board trustees. She has no respect for what she sees as a government that continues to play games with education. She is certainly upset with the teachers. She's upset that parents didn't count in this debate, that students didn't count in this debate, that the process didn't allow for early intervention to solving the problem when the government knew all along these were some of the problems that were going to happen.

The contentious issue here is teaching seven out of eight, as opposed to six out of eight.

1730

I tried during Bill 160 to show the importance of teachers having time to plan lessons, to mark students' work, to contact parents, to organize extracurricular activities, to meet with students, to set up teaching materials for their next class, to consult with administrators and fellow teachers, to deal with discipline and guidance matters, to communicate with community workers and organizations, so that students will get a well-rounded education. That's what high school teachers do with that fourth period or that seventh period out of eight. That's very important time.

The legislation that is being proposed, that will ultimately pass, will create in various sections of Ontario an inferior quality of education. It won't be because the parents don't want it; it won't be because the students are at fault; it won't be because the teachers are at fault. It will be clearly on the shoulders of Mike Harris and the Tory educational policy, which, without doubt, has not enhanced the quality of education. It has not made for greater participation in education. It has not expanded the choices students will have. It will not increase the students' access to proper textbooks etc.

What we see here is weak legislation in Bill 160 being supported by weaker legislation which was presented in the House today. I suggest to you that our primary motive here is to ensure that students get back into the classroom as quickly as possible and that we have ideal learning conditions. In order to do that, Ontario will have to vote out Mike Harris.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I want to raise a couple of issues in response to the statements of my friends from

the Liberal Party. It seems to me that education has been central to Ontario politics as long as we have had politics in this province, going right back to Egerton Ryerson. Those who would argue, as the government has at times, that we shouldn't bring politics into this area engaging in sophistry. Frankly, politics is the process that we are involved in, all of us, and we should admit that.

What is important here is to recognize that this situation was precipitated by the government's own action. There are those, like my friend from Fort William, who believe as I do, that the government fully intended this to happen. There are others who would be a little more kind than we might be, I suspect, and would say it is possible that the government didn't understand the ramifications of what they were doing. I think that is being too charitable.

The fact is the government fully intended to harm the education of students in Ontario. The government fully intended to demoralize the teaching profession to the point that they would take action in protesting what the government was doing to education as a last resort. The government fully intended to play politics with the education of students in this province by bringing in this kind of legislation, the kind of legislation that all of us should oppose, that all of us should be opposed to in principle and opposed to for the sake of the children.

Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock): I'd like to comment also on the comments that were made by the Liberal caucus. I would agree with the member for Hamilton East that teachers don't want to be locked out; they want to be in the classroom. I also agree with the member for Sudbury and the member for Fort William that we all want to see students back in the classroom.

We all know that Ontario school boards and the teachers' unions are currently negotiating their first collective bargaining agreement under the Education Act, and all of us want those negotiations to work.

When we look across the province, we know that many of the teachers and the boards across the province are

Mr Gerstein: I suppose the first thing that ought to

be said is that what happened here today at least shows that democracy can work, where three different parties come at a problem from three different ways but realize that what's most important is to get the children back to the classroom, and that's why the arrangement was worked out. Let there be no mistake about it: This party disagrees with the legislation that's in front of us.

I'd like to simplify things to a much greater extent than we sometimes do in this House. It baffles me to believe that the government keeps saying that it's improving education, making class sizes smaller, when all you have to do is look at the overall fiscal situation. They have taken \$1 billion out of public education since they came into office about three years ago. About 80% of all the money that's spent in education is spent on teaching salaries, whether we're talking about the school system, the university system, the college system, whatever. If you take \$1 billion out of education, in effect you're cutting out teachers. How can you say then that somehow classes are getting smaller, when in effect there are fewer dollars around for the teachers who are out there? The class size has to increase if you're taking that kind of money out.

The other issue I very quickly want to mention is the advertising dollars that have been spent by this government. So far it is \$6.4 million that could be spent on education, money whereby we could be buying some more books for education, as the Minister of Education so persistently talked about earlier, that is being spent currently on pure propaganda.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I'm glad to have the chance to comment briefly on the positions put forward by the Liberal caucus representatives and to say that I think, like everyone else, we understand the importance of having our children and our teachers back in the classroom, where they belong. That's why we went to great lengths today to try to find a way in which we could sever the bill that was in front of us and to deal with the most immediate

and parents and students looking at local priorities and local needs and doing their best to respond to them.

Those conditions for reaching local agreements that reflect local priorities and create good conditions in local classrooms will not exist unless this government takes longer-term steps to address the problems they have created, including an immediate review of a funding formula which is at the root of the confrontation which is occurring between teachers and boards in this province.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? Member for Algoma.

Mr Wildman: At the outset, I'd like to reserve some time for my leader. We will divide the time, if that's acceptable to the House.

I want to say clearly at the beginning of this debate that our caucus is diametrically opposed to this legislation. We will be voting against it. We will be putting amendments on the most distasteful parts of this bill. If the government is determined to go through with it, we hope the government at least will listen to the amendments put forward and will respond by accepting at least some of the amendments to try to alleviate some of the major problems with this legislation.

I think we should all recognize, from whatever point we look at this legislation, that the most important people in the education system are the pupils, the students at the elementary and secondary levels. They feel put upon and their parents feel put upon. They feel that they have been used and they don't have any control over the situation, that other people, whether it be the government, the boards or the teachers, are making decisions that directly affect their lives and they don't really have any say. I know the frustration they must feel at not being in the classroom and not being able to benefit from the education that they all want and need in order to do well in their own lives and in our society.

The second most important people in the education system are the teachers. They are the people who have to implement any changes, whether it be curriculum changes, whether it be types of instructional changes or organizational changes in the education system. Unfortunately, because of the approach this government has taken, both the legislation the government has brought in and passed and the statements that have been made by the Premier, the Minister of Education and Training and other members of the government about teachers have led to a very serious deterioration in morale among teachers. Teachers feel that they have indeed been put upon, that they are being blamed for every conceivable problem in society, yet they are not being given the resources, the time and the funding required to try to respond to some of those serious societal problems that teachers are now expected to deal with in the classroom and outside of the classroom.

The reason we are so diametrically opposed to this legislation is because we do not believe that simply ordering an end to strikes and lockouts, ordering teachers and students back into the classroom, will resolve anything. As a matter of fact, in our view, simply ordering

issue first, even though we will not be supporting the legislation, to at least allow the government to bring it forward and to deal with it and then to put off to the normal course of debate and discussion in this House those parts that make the more fundamental, long-term changes, for the purposes of the new education laws, which will continue to cause the grave problems that the Harris government has already caused in the system.

You cannot reconcile a position of the government that says it wants to reduce class size, which implies having more teachers, with a position on the other hand that says, "We're going to reduce the amount of money available," as the Harris government has done to school board after school board, which then puts school boards in the position where they have no other alternative but to reduce the number of teachers they have. Those two things cannot be reconciled. The improvements we need in our school system and which we all purport to say we want will not happen and cannot happen until there is a willingness politically to actually put back into the school system at least those amounts of money that Mike Harris is taking out of the system.

That's why I am proud, as a member of the New Democratic Party caucus, that we not only say we believe in reinstituting that funding cut, but we actually are talking about how that can be done by taking back portions of the tax cut that go to the wealthiest citizens in Ontario, giving us as a province the ability to find that \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion that in part can go back into the education system, which we all in this House say we want to see.

The Deputy Speaker: Response?

Mrs McLeod: I appreciate the comments that have been added to the debate. I want to concur with my colleague from Dovercourt. All of us on this side of the House want to have our students in the classrooms. We want the students of the eight boards that are particularly affected by this legislation, that are currently in a strike and lockout situation, to be back in their classrooms. Because we want them back in their classrooms as early as possible, we are prepared to expedite the debate on legislation which we nevertheless believe is badly produced and presented legislation.

We also, though, want to make sure that students are able to be in classrooms in boards across this province. We don't want to see more strikes and more lockouts and more students' education disrupted because of the impossible conditions which this government has created to reach local agreements. We want students in every classroom in this province to be in settings which are creating conditions for effective teaching and learning. That's why we so deplore the kinds of tensions and conditions which have made confrontation virtually inevitable at a local level and which have militated against any locally arrived at solution. We believe the best solutions for students are not centralized, dictatorial decisions imposed on the classrooms, but arise from local boards and teachers

teachers and students back into the classrooms will probably exacerbate in the long run the problems that we're facing in education today.

It's interesting. I've received some e-mails, as I'm sure most members of the House have, on this issue over the last few days.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): What is e-mail?

Mr Wildman: I'm told it's got something to do with electronics, as opposed to what is sometimes called snail mail. I've got a couple here which I'd like to refer to.

"Dear Sir:

"Bill 160 is the problem. Legislation will not remove extra help end up giving up and dropping out of school, and then one thing leads to another and you can imagine what happens next.

"Some of the teachers we may be losing are some of our best. This isn't just happening with our education. Premier Harris... is taking important things away and giving half of that back and everyone thinks he's great.

"I'm sure I am not the only one who thinks this way. Everyone's futures are on the line. Please don't push us around."

This is a grade 6, 11-year-old student from London. That testifies to the state of education, thanks to this government.

These are only three e-mails, but we have one person who says, "Ordering teachers back to work doesn't resolve the problems presented by Bill 160." We have a parent who is very concerned about her special-needs child who will not have an educational assistant to help her. That's not going to affect just her education; it's going to affect the education of the other kids in her class. We have a young student who says there are 33 kids in her class and the teachers can't give them the kind of personal help that they need.

Ordering an end to lockouts and strikes that have kept students and teachers out of the classroom will not resolve any of these problems. They will simply order kids back into classes that have 33 kids in them, that do not have educational assistants, that do not have the resources they need to provide the education that the kids need and deserve. That's what this legislation does. At best, it could be referred to as a Band-Aid. It gets rid of the lockouts and strikes that are happening right now, but it does absolutely nothing about the needs of education, the needs of students across Ontario. Those needs are not being met largely because of Bill 160, the changes this government has made in education, the money the government has taken out of the education system and the new funding formula, so-called, which takes money away from kids' education.

The combination of all of those things, as my colleague from Dovercourt said, puts boards of education and trustees, another important group of people involved in the education system, in an untenable position. In many boards today trustees are trying to grapple with this conundrum. On the one hand, Bill 160 purports to put a cap on average class sizes. It says there will be an average

A.E. Duffield public school and I am in grade 6. Recently "My name is Heidi! Butler and I'm 11 years old. I go to I have another one from a student. It says:

"That's signed by Maureen Vance.

1750

That's signed by Maureen Vance.

gone a long way towards providing the basic services we money spent on your marketing campaign would have alone help her with her classroom work. I'm sure the resources to have someone take her to the bathroom, let teach her full potential when there isn't even enough "I would like to know how my daughter is supposed to other children in the class are suffering as well.

is my child not getting the attention she needs, but the out of the classroom when she gets disruptive. So not only instructional assistant, "there is no one who can take her to communicate. At present," due to the absence of her year-old. She cannot talk, is not toilet-trained and is subject to fits of temper due to her frustration at being unable "My daughter functions at about the level of a two-tional assistant, due to the funding changes.

kindergarten this year, would not be getting an instructional assistant, due to the funding changes.

She says she received this "on the same day that I found out that my special-needs daughter, who started kindergarten this year, would not be getting an instructional assistant, due to the funding changes.

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across the board — these new district boards that have

been imposed on the people of Ontario — of 25 at the elementary level in class and 22 at the secondary level. But in most cases those numbers are mythical. They don't exist.

My youngest child, my daughter, just started junior kindergarten this year. She's really excited about it. She

really wanted to go to school. She's ready to start to learn to read. She wants to learn how to add and subtract. She doesn't know about until I was much farther on in education than she is. But she is in junior kindergarten, and junior kindergarten in the school board that was the precursor of the school board whose jurisdiction she is now under used to be every day, half days. They used to try to keep junior kindergarten at 15 students, max. For anything over 15 students, the teacher had an educational assistant to help, and they never went over about 22.

This year, Triana's first year in school, about which she is really excited, there are 27 kids in the class, and it's not just a junior kindergarten, half day every day. Instead of a half day every day, they now have two full days one week and three full days the next to try to save money on the busing because of the funding formula.

They have one teacher. It's not just for junior kindergarten, but for a mixed junior and senior kindergarten. So we have 27 children going three days one week and two days the next week, full day, at ages four and five in a mixed junior and senior kindergarten. They have one educational assistant. If they had 30 kids in the class, they would get two, but because it's not up to 30 yet, they only have one. So they have one teacher and one educational assistant.

There's a lot of noise in this classroom. There is not a lot of room for the kids because, as any of you who have been to a junior kindergarten or a kindergarten will know, they have various play areas, interest areas. The sandbox, the water area, the little kitchen and other things take up room, take up space. The mats take up space. There isn't very much room.

My little girl is still excited about her experience at school. I hope she continues to be. But if this government insists on taking away from the resources that are required to give my little girl and all the other little girls and boys in this province a quality education, they will hurt all of them. They will change their attitudes about school and education, they won't achieve as they should, and this government will also be responsible for harming our whole society.

Whatever money they have saved now will be spent later on, because every study that has been done shows that for every dollar spent in good-quality early childhood education, seven dollars are saved in the long run because of fewer dropouts, less dependence on social assistance, less problems with delinquency, less incarceration, more post-secondary education graduates, more people with good jobs who provide for themselves and their families and make a contribution to society.

1800

That's what this government has done to education. Passing back-to-work legislation, back-to-school legislation, putting kids back into classrooms and schools that are inadequately funded because of this government's funding formula will not resolve a thing. As I said, it may in fact exacerbate the situation.

So we are opposed to this legislation. We are opposed to it in principle. We're opposed to the truncation of the collective bargaining process that this government has imposed on teachers and boards. But we're also opposed to it because we believe fundamentally that this government has harmed the education of our children in this province, continues to harm that education and is simply trying to respond to the concerns of those parents where there have been lockouts and strikes by ending them without doing anything about the long-term problems facing the students and the education system.

Some might argue, "At least if you get the kids back into the classes and get the teachers back into the classrooms in the schools, then they can negotiate all of these matters and they can be resolved in the long run." What happens? How are these boards supposed to respond to the needs of these students when they have a funding formula that says they must have fewer teachers despite an average class size legislated which says in many cases they need more teachers?

Some boards responded by locking out their teachers. I must say as an aside that I found it bizarre when I received a copy of a letter from the chair of the Catholic board in Toronto to which he had addressed to my leader requesting my leader to support back-to-work legislation to end the lockout in Toronto. I found that bizarre. If the chair and the members of the board of trustees of the Toronto Catholic board wanted to end the lockout, all they had to do was unlock the schools. They locked the teachers out. If they want them in the classroom, let them in. You don't have to pass back-to-work legislation to end a lockout.

This government signalled very early on through some times conflicting statements that the government intended to legislate at some point or other. At first they said they were going to wait till the Education Relations Commission had ruled jeoparding. For political reasons they decided not to wait for that. But they indicated they were going to legislate early on. It certainly was not in the interests of boards like the Toronto Catholic board to negotiate. All they had to do was wait. As my leader raised in question period today, all they had to do was wait for legislation. There was no reason to negotiate.

I noticed that the Minister of Education and Training, in introducing this legislation, said this is not to prevent boards and teachers from continuing to negotiate and come to agreements. Why on earth would a board, particularly if it doesn't have the money it needs, try to negotiate when now this government has intervened with this kind of legislation? It's not in the interests of the board to do that. It may be in the interests of the students, but again, to be fair, if the board doesn't have the money,

whoever, have time during their day to do preparation, to prepare briefs, to prepare presentations. That is part of their workday, and up to now that has been accepted as part of a teacher's day, to have some time during the day to prepare for the lessons that teacher is teaching the students. If you give a teacher a timetable of four periods out of four, it's not 25 more minutes a day as the Premier is wont to say. It's an hour or 75 more minutes of classroom time, but it's also an extra couple of hours of preparation time and marking added on outside of the school day.

That's why teachers are upset and it's also why we don't have any extracurricular activities this fall, because if I'm a phys-ed teacher who also teaches some math and up to now I've coached basketball or football, during the day I use some of my time to prepare for practice in the evening, to get the equipment ready, to allocate time and to figure out what kinds of plays we're going to practise, what the needs of various players are and what kind of coaching they need. I don't have any time to do that if I'm teaching four periods out of four, so therefore I am not going to coach in the evening. As a result, there are no extracurricular activities this fall.

1810

Ordering teachers back to work in this legislation is not going to do anything about that. It's not going to re-establish extracurricular activities. It's not going to start up the drama club. It's not going to ensure that the orchestra is operating. Students aren't going to have the opportunity to participate in the chess club or to play sports. It's not going to happen, and that is a very important part of their educational experience. It not only develops the skills involved in those various things, whether it's musicianship, acting ability or sports skills; it also helps to develop teamwork and sharing and gives individuals a feeling of achievement and helps them to learn leadership.

It's a very important part of education, and directly as a result of the changes this government has imposed through Bill 160 and the changes in the funding formula, it has ended. We are denying the students of Ontario something that every one of us in this Legislature had the opportunity to experience when we were in elementary and high school, whether we were members of the math club, the science club, the football team, the basketball team or the school orchestra, the school choir or whatever. We're denying that to students today, and it's really unfortunate.

With Bill 160, two pieces of legislation came into conflict with one another. This government, through Bill 160, took teachers out of what was called Bill 100, the teachers' Labour Relations Act. Under the labour relations act, collective bargaining act, and put them under the Ontario contracts can't be changed without renegotiation, but Bill 160 also imposed new terms and conditions on the teachers which were in contravention of collective bargaining agreements that had been arrived at over the years between teachers and boards. It said that teachers will teach seven out of eight, so many more minutes per day, per week, but at the same time it put teachers under the

there isn't likely to be a settlement and a resolution of the problems facing students.

This legislation was really objectionable when it included not just back-to-school legislation requirements, but also amendments to the Education Act which would basically impose what the Minister of Education and Training said in the letter he sent to all the boards a couple of weeks ago; that is, a redefinition of "instructional time" and a decision to control what could be negotiated by teachers and boards, not just in those eight boards where there are disruptions, but for all the boards in Ontario.

I am pleased to say that as a result of the discussions among the parties and the House leaders today the government agreed to remove at least that portion of the bill so that we can sever that and it has been introduced as another piece of legislation, another bill, that will be debated. After this matter has been dealt with, it can be debated at greater length.

I found it a little bit odd or passing strange that today the leader of the official opposition, after we had suggested severing the bill, got up and said, "If the third party would agree, perhaps we could sever the bill." Surely he would understand that we would agree with our own idea, but then again he might not have understood that, I don't know. At any rate I'm glad that all three parties at least were able to move in this direction. However, there remain, as my leader emphasized today, sections within this back-to-work legislation which are indeed objectionable and which we would have preferred to see severed as well. We intend to bring in amendments to try and alleviate some of the worst aspects of those sections.

I don't like back-to-work legislation. I don't believe it serves the students of the province or the collective bargaining process at all. This is draconian legislation. This is legislation that will impose fines of \$2,000 per day for an individual or \$25,000 a day for a union that doesn't comply. That's pretty tough legislation. The minister says that he does this with a heavy heart; it seems to me he does it with a heavy hand.

It imposes the terms and conditions, the so-called seven out of eight. The problem with this argument of course — this is very hard for most members of the public to grasp if they're not directly involved in education — is that the majority of secondary schools in Ontario today do not have an eight-period day because they are on a semester system. They are on a four-period day. To have seven periods out of eight doesn't work because there aren't eight periods. Boards can't reorganize the schools by going from a six-out-of-eight to a seven-out-of-eight timetable because they are mostly now on a three-out-of-four timetable. What it means is that for one semester some of the teachers will be teaching four periods out of four, and these are long periods, in some cases anywhere from an hour to 75 minutes.

Mr Wayne Wetlaufer (Kitchen): It's almost like working in industry. I hear one of members saying it's almost like working in industry. Let me tell you that other professionals, whether they be lawyers or accountants or

labour relations act, which said you can't change these

things without negotiation.

So much of what this government has done is contrary

to the needs of students and teachers that it's no wonder

the morale of both is so low today.

As part of the back-to-work legislation, this bill im-

poses arbitration. What is really disturbing and what we

as a party cannot accept is that the legislation severely

circumscribes what the arbitrator can and cannot do in

trying to come to an agreement between a teachers' fed-

eration and a board. It states that the arbitrator may not

make an award that would interfere with the board's right

to determine the scheduling of pupils' instruction. Sched-

uling the number of periods that a teacher would teach

was something that was negotiable under Bill 100 and

most boards and teachers' federations thought it was still

negotiable even under Bill 160. But what has happened

here is that while it may be negotiable, you can't arbitrate

it.

The arbitrator may not make an award that would

interfere with the length of the instructional programs

provided to students on school days and the length of the

pupils' instructional periods. The arbitrator must ensure

that an award will not cause the board to incur a deficit.

That's another way of saying the arbitrator must take into

account the ability of the employer to pay in making a

decision.

Mr Froese: What's wrong with that?

Mr Wildman: What's wrong with it is that this gov-

ernment has imposed an inadequate funding formula,

which means it's going to be very difficult for the arbitra-

tor to come up with any agreement which is acceptable.

Mr Froese: There is more money put into the class-

room. You know that.

Mr Wildman: That is one of the silliest comments.

That is the biggest myth. This government believes that if

they say it enough times, if they say it often enough, no

matter how untrue it is, people will believe it. The fact is,

this government has taken over \$1 billion out of the edu-

cation system. The minister says, "Oh, yes, I admit that

we have cut funding to administration." Well, they have

cut funding to administration — not very much, but they

have. But they've cut enormous amounts out of class-

rooms.

Why do you think so many boards have cut so many

teachers' positions? Why do you think this government

had to negotiate with the teachers' federations for an early

retirement package so that so many teachers could leave

the profession? Because the boards don't have enough

money under the funding formula to continue having the

same number of teachers they had before. Teachers are in

the classroom. You take money away from teachers,

you're taking money away from that classroom. If you

don't have enough teachers, it means more kids per class-

room, not less. It means larger classes. It means less time

for students individually with teachers.

I'll give you an example. Sault Ste Marie, under their

old collective agreement, had negotiated a maximum class

size of 33. It didn't say classes had to be at 33; it said that

had to be the maximum and it's been coming down over

the years. This year, as a result of the funding formula, in

most high schools in Sault Ste Marie every class is 33.

Every class. Why? Because we now have this enormous

board, the largest board geographically in Ontario, the

Algoma district board, which doesn't just include the city

of Sault Ste Marie but includes many, many widespread,

very small communities.

It includes one of the smallest high schools in Ontario,

the Hornepayne High School, which is about 320 miles

north of Sault Ste Marie. That school has 90 students,

total. At the OAC level in history in Hornepayne they may

have three students. Obviously if you're going to make up

an average across the board that is going to come out to

22, the number of students in each class in the city is

really high. That's what's happened. Thank goodness they

had negotiated a maximum class size before so that they at

least couldn't go over 33, because they would have. It's

true that in the past they had very small classes in

Hornepayne. They always did because they don't have

very many students there. But the city of Sault Ste Marie

students didn't have to have larger classes because they

had to work out some arbitrary average with Hornepayne.

Why aren't there more teachers in those schools?

Because the board got cut. The funding formula means

less money for the city of Sault Ste Marie and for the

Algoma district board. That board has over the next three

years a progressively cut.

This is what is really weird and really scary: The arbitra-

tor must not only take into account the ability to pay,

the arbitrator must ensure that the award will not cause a

deficit, but he must also provide a written explanation of

how the board will pay any increase that has been part of

the settlement without incurring a deficit. So now we are

going to ask arbitrators to come up with a budget for the

board.

The arbitrator is going to have to be able to explain

within so many days to the government how the board is

going to implement any increase. With the small amount

of experience I've had with arbitrators, I can tell you that

there are not going to be any increases, because it's be-

yond the pale to expect arbitrators to be able to come up

with a plan to tell the board how to spend its money.

1820

It says here that boards and unions can submit joint or

separate plans to the ministry for making up lost instruc-

tional time within seven days of the end of the strike or

lockout. I think it's probably a good idea to make up the

instructional time, but again I wonder what this is going to

do for morale in the system. It says the board must consult

with the parents, but if they don't come up with a plan, a

plan will be imposed by the ministry. This government

likes imposing things. They like to order people to do

things. You take the money out. There isn't enough money

for the kids, there isn't enough money in the classroom, so

you just order the boards to fix it, to resolve it.

It's interesting. Even where the boards and the unions

can come up with plans, where they agree on a plan, the

can come up with plans, where they agree on a plan, the

can come up with plans, where they agree on a plan, the

can come up with plans, where they agree on a plan, the

minister can overturn the plan. The minister can say, "I don't like the way you've decided to make up the time." Maybe they've decided to extend the school day or something. I don't know what plan they might come up with, but they come up with this plan and the minister says: "No, I don't like that. Instead, I'm going to order you to keep the same school day you have now but you will continue teaching for an extra two weeks or three weeks or four weeks at the end of June into July." As a matter of fact, I think that will probably happen, because it has happened already. After the protest last fall, the minister requested boards to tell him how they were going to make up the time, and when they came up with plans he didn't like, he told them they couldn't do it. In the Ottawa area, in eastern Ontario, where they had the ice storm on top of the protest and had missed an additional amount of time, this government came in quite arbitrarily and told the boards how to make up the time.

I think this legislation is just part of an overall approach this government has, and that is best exemplified by the Premier's comments the other day. The Premier was speaking before what is sometimes called a blue-chip crowd, a business group, and he said, in essence, that business leaders shouldn't hire graduates, not just in Ontario but in Canada. This is the government, ironically, that says it wants to create more jobs. But the Premier, the leader of the government, gets up before a business group and says the graduates in Ontario are inadequate: "They can't spell. They don't know English grammar. Don't hire them." How do you think that affects the students of this province? How do you think it affects the morale of the teachers? How do you think it affects the parents?

The Premier also goes abroad and makes speeches there about the quality of our education system, that he wants business investment in this province and that one of the great advantages we have is our highly skilled workforce. I guess the Premier decides what he's going to say about education based on the particular political intent he has at the particular moment. But I suspect his statements to the business group here in Toronto were closer to what he really thinks than what he said in the United Kingdom last year when he was asking for foreign investment to come and was touting the highly skilled workforce we have in Ontario.

This government claims they have increased the funding for classroom education. They believe that bringing in back-to-work legislation will resolve an immediate problem facing students and parents in the education system in this province. Well, this is what's going to happen: Starting next year, particularly in some parts of rural Ontario, we are going to see school boards closing schools. That's what's coming.

I'd like to hear the members of the Conservative Party who claim that they have put more money into the classroom explain to rural parents, to the students of small-town and farm country in this province, how it is that if they put more money into the classrooms, more money into the education system, small schools in rural Ontario are being closed. I'd like the members of the Conservative

Party to talk to the downtown, inner-city parents in Toronto and Ottawa and explain to them why it is, if they're right that they've put more money into the classroom, that small schools in Toronto and Ottawa, neighbourhood schools, are going to close. I'd like them to explain to the rural small towns and to those neighbourhoods in urban Ontario why it is that the school, which is one of the central institutions in the community, is going to close down. I'd like them to explain how ordering teachers and students back into the classroom helps to resolve that.

The fact is that Bill 160 has caused this problem. It has been exacerbated by a funding formula that takes money out of classrooms, doesn't put more money into them, and this legislation is not going to resolve it at all.

I'd like to defer now to my leader, who will complete the time for our caucus.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): I want to make a few comments upon the government's legislation, but most of all I want to make some comments about the procedure they employ to get the whole province to this legislation.

This is a government that said three years ago, not two months after they were sworn in as a government, that they were going to create a crisis in education. The then Minister of Education stepped in front of a video camera and said, "The government needs to create a crisis in education." Then over the next two and a half years, they proceeded to take a billion dollars out of elementary and secondary classrooms, and that is being felt and has been felt virtually everywhere in the province.

Then they brought in Bill 160, and Bill 160 had in it a clause which in effect wiped out all the teachers' contracts and all the collective agreements to deal with schools and education as of the end of August 1998. So get this: At the very time when schools had to be opening in the fall of 1998, at the very time when you need teachers and caretakers and school secretaries and maintenance people, all those people who make the education system run, this government destroys all the contracts for our schools.

1830

Expecting one or two new contracts to be negotiated and to be signed at that time would be acceptable. Expecting 10 or 12 new contracts to be negotiated and signed and agreed upon would be exceptional. To create a scenario where literally hundreds of contracts are wiped out and have to be negotiated and signed at that time creates chaos, it creates a crisis, and that is exactly what this government set out to do. That's what you've done in Bill 160.

But it doesn't end there, because what this government has done over the past month is try every dirty trick it can to derail the negotiations that were happening, to pour cold water on the discussions that were happening and to frustrate the meetings between boards of education and teachers to work out acceptable collective agreements. You've done it.

In my own case — the board of education which covers my home town — the board and secondary school teachers were in the process of negotiating a collective agree-

mental needs of those children with classes that large with only one teacher in a classroom, and no teacher's aide, no teacher's assistant. They have all been taken out of the classroom because of the cuts you have imposed on the school system.

I invite parents across the province to go into the schools, go into the classrooms and see on a day-to-day basis the havoc that this Conservative government is creating in our schools, and this legislation will not fix any of that.

To give another example, we know that by the time we get around to December, under Bill 160 boards of education will have to have identified the schools they're going to close. We know, for example, in the Waterloo region close to 10 schools have been identified for closure. Which schools are these? Overwhelmingly they're the smaller community schools out in the rural area. They're the schools that are part of the fabric of the community. They're the schools that bring parents, children, teachers and the community together. These are the schools that you're going to close.

If we look, for example, at a large city like Toronto, the schools that you are already proposing to close because of the limitations of your funding formula, because of how much money you have taken out of the system are overwhelmingly going to be the good neighbourhood schools. They're smaller schools, schools that are integrated into the neighbourhood, and they're the very schools that you are going to force to be closed.

1840

This legislation is not going to fix in any way the crisis that this government has created for our children and for our teachers in our schools. This legislation, which we are going to oppose, which we are going to vote against, frankly is nothing more than a band-aid fix. It will get children back into the classroom, but it is not going to resolve any of the underlying issues, any of the very difficult issues, any of the crisis issues you've created in our schools. I just say over and over again, shame on you, shame on this government.

At the heart of it, what's going on here is this: This government values giving the wealthiest people in this province an income tax scheme. You value that more than you value the education of our children. At the end of the day, when you sweep away all the smoke and mirrors, what you're doing is taking over \$1 billion a year out of education and you're using that money to finance an income tax scheme that is only going to benefit the wealthiest people in this province. That's what you're all about. That's why you are so wrong. You don't understand yet that people in this province value the education of their children more than they value some phony income tax scheme that doesn't benefit the majority of people. You're going to find out over the weeks ahead how strongly people in this province oppose your central direction, that you would take money from education, would take money from health care in order to finance this phony income tax scheme.

I want to say to the government that over the next few days, as we debate those parts of this bill that have been severed, the most odious parts of this bill that have been severed, we're going to keep coming back to this issue. Frankly you don't have an educational agenda. You only have a political agenda, which uses our students, which uses our children, which uses our school system as a pawn in that very negative and destructive political agenda. You don't have an educational agenda. If you did, you'd be putting back some of the money you've taken out over the last three years and you'd be stopping this process of trying to take money out this year.

We're going to vote against this. We're happy that children will have the chance to go back to school later this week, but I want to say to parents and children across the province that merely having children back in the classroom is not going to fix the huge problems in education that this government has deliberately gone out there and created.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Comments and questions?

Mr Tomi Skarica (Wentworth North): A number of the opposition members have talked about the underfunding of the system and basically said the government has taken out \$1 billion, I've heard. Mr Hampton was quoting the newspapers as saying \$300 million was taken out of the system. He said just a couple minutes ago that all kinds of money has been taken over the last three years.

What are the real facts? I obtained statistics from the Ministry of Education. When we took over government in 1995, what was being spent on education in the elementary and secondary levels was \$14.1 billion. In 1997 that increased to \$14.4 billion. It has been anticipated that in this calendar year the expenditures will go up to \$15 billion. So arguments that we're cutting education to pay for an income tax cut are really false on both levels. We're not cutting education, and if you look at the budget, the income tax cut has in fact been self-funding and we're making more now, the government is receiving more revenues after the income tax cut, than before. So both of those statements I suggest just don't bear up under scrutiny.

I'd like to talk about what's happening locally in our system. There's a lockout in the Roman Catholic high schools. What's interesting about what has happened locally is that under Bill 160 our local Roman Catholic high schools got an extra \$6.5 million. I got that budget and I wondered, "What is the board spending that \$6.5 million on?" Half of it has gone for teachers' salaries and extra benefits, and the other half has gone as follows: to fix two schools, to buy books, to hire special education teachers and elementary teachers. That's not acceptable to the union, because their demands simply —

Mr Gerritsen: Why not, to buy books?

Mr David Caplan (Orléans): Horrible. Why not?

Mr Skarica: That is not acceptable. The fact is that the union wants 15% raises over the next two years, which would consume all of that money so there would be

nothing going to the kids in the classroom. That's what

this is all about.

Mr Bradley: What the government always says, and I

know the Ministry of Education and the Premier say this

when they're in trouble, is, "Our problem is that we are

just not communicating well enough." Then they pour

millions of dollars into television ads, radio ads, full-page

newspaper ads, pamphlets that they send around to every

household in Ontario, wasting the taxpayers' money on

self-serving advertising. I remember Mike Harris when he

ran. He was all about saving money. This government, the

Common Sense Revolution, wanted to look at every possi-

ble expenditure and make sure it was a well-spent dollar.

Now there they are just throwing money away on self-

serving government advertising, the worst I've ever seen.

The worst example I've ever seen is with this government.

Instead of trying to keep people together, instead of

trying to build a consensus in education in this province,

these people are trying to set one group against another.

Those teachers out there who happen to think it's the

board of education's fault should look beyond the board of

education, and to Toronto. They should pin the tail on the

donkey, as the old game used to go as a child, and the

some building at Queen's Park.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: No, it is not the chief government whip,

but I'm close when I say that.

Here the government is. It's got boards fighting with

boards, teachers fighting with boards, teachers fighting

with teachers. Instead of trying to improve the system the

Minister of Education decided to defund the system so that

7,500 teaching positions would completely disappear.

He's been successful in that, for sure.

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): This legisla-

tion may well get children back into the classrooms but

it's not going to get quality education back into our

schools. Howard Hampton talked about the need to get

out there and take a look at exactly what's happening.

Come on down to Edith Cavell school in St Catharines

where special-needs teachers this year have no teaching

assistant, where special-needs teachers are buying pencils

and apparatus out of pocket to take into the classroom

because they're simply not available to the kids in their

school in their given classrooms.

Talk to the teacher from Barrie I did, her first year

teaching up in Barrie. I was over at Club Roma on Satur-

day night. Talk to that teacher, a first-year teacher, a

grade six teacher. She had to buy her own piano. She's the

music teacher. She bought her own piano and moved it

into the school. There wouldn't have been a music pro-

gram with the appropriate tools if this teacher hadn't out

of pocket, as a first-year teacher, literally — it's not a new

piano. She bought a used piano and took it into the school

so that she could teach the fundamental music curriculum

to those kids.

It's not isolated to those two incidents. Get out there.

Get out of your limousines and take a look at what's hap-

pening to the classrooms of this province after you've

ravaged them with your defunding of public education. It's

happening at the preschool level; it's happening at the

elementary level; it's happening at the high school level

and, quite frankly, at the post-secondary level as well.

We're seeing kids who are increasingly being deprived

of what I believe very strongly is their right to quality

education because this government, as has been indicated

and will be indicated again, is far more adamant about

giving its rich friends a tax break than it is about adequate

levels of funding for public education, be it in Welland,

Thorold, Pelham, St Catharines, or quite frankly any other

part of this province. If you people got out of your chairs,

out of your weird, wild world of fantasy, and saw the

reality of it you'd be ashamed of yourselves.

Mr Froese: I'd like to reiterate what the member from

Welland —

Interjections.

Mr Froese: Certainly not the member for Welland, but

what the member for Wentworth North said. The fact is

that \$15 billion is being spent on education, more than

ever before, and the money's going into the classroom.

Under the funding model, there's a non-classroom cate-

gory and there's a classroom category. Within that cate-

gory of classroom spending, the money can be moved

around, and it's going to the kids in the classroom via

teachers.

What we're seeing across the province is that boards

who are negotiating contracts with the teachers are finding

the funding within that model to do it. We see across the

province boards upon boards that have negotiated deals,

settlements, that are advantageous to their kids because

the boards, the parents and the teachers in those areas

know that the kids are first and they're number one.

They're willing to negotiate settlements, and that's what

this bill is about.

Those who have not negotiated should take those

examples of the boards and the teachers and the parents

negotiating those contracts. I said earlier too that they

should take the example of what's happening in the col-

lege system — two years without a contract. Did they go

on strike? No. Why? Because the most important thing

was the students and their education. They continued to

work to make a deal, and that's what this bill is about. It's

to get the teachers back into the classroom and to keep

negotiating those contracts and those deals that need to be

made. That's what this bill is about, that's what the min-

ister talked about, that's what the parents have been

pleading with our government to do, and we're doing it.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Algoma has

two minutes to respond.

Mr Wildman: I'd like to thank the members who have

responded to my comments and those of my leader. I

would just say that if the members opposite are so con-

vinced that there is so much more money in the classroom,

perhaps they could explain why in Sault Ste Marie —

Mr Wildman: I'm just using an example. The schools

in Sault Ste Marie, schools that used to be cleaned every

day, are now cleaned every other day. Why is it that

schools where they used to clean the boards and the brushes every day are now cleaned every other day? Only in the math classrooms, because there they use the boards so much, have they agreed to clean every day. The reason is simple: The board doesn't have the money. The board, under your funding formula, has had to make cuts. I suppose the minister would argue that cleaning the schools is administration and therefore it doesn't count and therefore you're not taking money away from the classroom, but I'll tell you that the atmosphere for the students and the teachers in those dirty classrooms and those dirty washrooms and those dirty gyms is terrible.

I'm not making this up. I didn't suggest to the board that they should stop cleaning every day. They did it because they don't have the money, thanks to your funding formula. And I'm not talking about a public board; I'm talking about the Catholic board that supposedly got more money under your funding formula. Under your funding formula the Catholic board cannot clean the schools adequately, much less teach the kids, and this legislation is not going to solve anything. It's just going to put kids back into dirty classrooms.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. Mr David Johnson has moved second reading of Bill 62. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."
All those opposed, say "nay."
In my opinion, the ayes have it.
Call in the members; there will be a five-minute bell.
The division bells rang from 1855 to 1900.
The Acting Speaker: All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Barrett, Toby
Beaubien, Marel
Guzzo, Gary J.
Hardeman, Ernie
Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Ross, Lillian

Nays

Agostino, Dominic
Bartolucci, Rick
Boyd, Marion
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Michael A.
Caplan, David
Christopherson, David
Cleary, John C.
Colle, Mike
Conway, Sean G.
Crozier, Bruce
Cullen, Alex
Marchese, Rosano
Lessard, Wayne
Lankin, Frances
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Kormos, Peter
Kennedy, Gerard
Hoy, Pat
Hampton, Howard
Gravelle, Michael
Gerretsen, John
Gurung, Alvin
McGuinty, Dalton
McLeod, Lyn
Michals, Frank
Morin, Gilles E.
Phillips, Gerry
Pupatello, Sandra
Ramsay, David
Ruprecht, Tony
Sillipo, Tony
Wildman, Bud
Wood, Len

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
Pursuant to the order of the House dated today, this bill stands referred to the committee of the whole House. I do now leave the chair for the House to go into the committee of the whole.

Report continues in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic	Hamilton East / -Est	L	
Arnott, Ted	Wellington	PC	parliamentary assistant (Small Business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Baird, John R.	Napan	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Finances
Barrett, Toby	Norfolk	PC	
Bartolucci, Rick	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Hon / L'hon Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Baughen, Marcel	Lambton	PC	
Bisson, Gilles	Cochrane South / -Sud	ND	deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Boushy, Dave	Sarnia	PC	
Boyd, Marlon	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	deputy opposition leader, opposition House leader / chef adjoint de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Services correctionnels
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, David	Orillia	L	
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Castelli, Annamaria	Downsview	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	
Chudleigh, Ted	Haltim North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Présidente de la Chambre et Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Cleary, John C.	Corwall	L	
Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	
Cullen, Alex	Ottawa West / -Ouest	L	
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre délégué à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peelborough	PC	parliamentary assistant (Agriculture and Food) to the Minister of Agriculture and Food / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Member / Député(e)	Circumscription / Constituency	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC	
Doyle, Ed	Westworth East / -Est	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Elliot, Brenda	Quep	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Fisher, Barbara	Bruce	PC	parliamentary assistant (Rural Affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Ford, Douglas B.	Elobicoke-Humber	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward- Lennox-Hastings-Sud	PC	
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	parliamentary assistant (Colleges and Universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Gall, Doug	Northumberland	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Environnement
Gertsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	parliamentary assistant (Municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Crimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Guzzo, Gary J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant (Municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
L'hon Michael D.	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Elobicoke-Rexdale	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines, deputy government House leader / President du Conseil de gestion, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines, vice-leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre de la Santé
Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister of Long-Term Care, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Soins de longue durée, ministre délégué aux affaires des personnes âgées
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Johnson, Hon / L'hon David	Don Mills	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC	
Jordan, W. Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	parliamentary assistant (Tourism) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Tourisme) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Kells, Morley	Egbert-Lakeshore	PC	
Kennedy, Gerard	York South / -Sud	L	
Kiecs, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Kornos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND	
Kwinter, Monic	Wilson Heights	L	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott et Russell / Prescott et Russell	L	
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Leach, Hon / L'hon Al	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Lessard, Wayne	Windsor-Riverside	ND	
Marchese, Rosarco	Fort York	ND	
Marland, Hon / L'hon Margaree	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Children's Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (enfance)
Marcel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général
Mathews, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Travail
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLean, Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	
Michash, Frank	Kenora	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Morn, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Munro, Julia	Durham-York	PC	
Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	
Mushinski, Marilyn	Scarborough-Eglar	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjoint parlementaire du premier ministre
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	adjoint parlementaire assistant to the Minister of Health / parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health
North, Peter	Eglar	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	
Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC	parliamentary assistant to the minister delegated aux Affaires autochtones adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L	
Petit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND	
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC	
Pupacillo, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L	
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TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 28 septembre 1998

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 1998 sur le prolongement
de délais applicables à l'impôt
foncier, projet de loi 61, *M. Eves*
Adoptée.....1972

Loi de 1998 sur le retour à l'école,
projet de loi 62, *M. David Johnson*
Adoptée.....1972

Loi de 1998 sur les heures
d'enseignement : normes
minimales, projet de loi 63,
M. David Johnson
Adoptée.....1988

SANCTION ROYALE

La lieutenante-gouverneure.....1986

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 1998 sur le retour à l'école,
projet de loi 62, *M. David Johnson*
Adoptée.....2013

CONTENTS

Monday 28 September 1998

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Property taxation	1969
Mr Ruprecht	1969
Arthritis	1969
Mrs Boyd	1969
Ruby Conway	1969
Mr Hudak	1969
Hospital restructuring	1970
Mr Bradley	1970
Education funding	1970
Mrs Churley	1970
Crawford Smyth	1970
Mr Newman	1970
Nelson Mandela	1970
Mr Curtling	1970
Teachers' collective bargaining	1971
Mrs Lankin	1971
Speech pathology	1971
Mr Galt	1971
REPORTS BY COMMITTEES	
Standing committee on administration of justice	1971
Mr Ouellette	1971
Report adopted	1971
Standing committee on government agencies	1971
The Speaker	1971
Reports deemed adopted	1971
FIRST READINGS	
Property Tax Deadline Extension Act, 1998, Bill 61, <i>Mr Eves</i>	1972
Agreed to	1972
Mr Eves	1972
Back to School Act, 1998, Bill 62, <i>Mr David Johnson</i>	1972
Agreed to	1972
Mr David Johnson	1972
Standards Act, 1998, Bill 63, <i>Mr David Johnson</i>	1988
Agreed to	1988

MOTIONS

Private members' public business	1973
Mr Sterling	1973
Agreed to	1973
STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTERS AND RESPONSES	
Teachers' collective bargaining	1973
Mr David Johnson	1973
Mr McGuinty	1974
Mr Hampton	1974
ORAL QUESTIONS	
Teachers' collective bargaining	1975, 1977
Mr McGuinty	1975, 1977
Mr David Johnson	1975, 1977
1978, 1980, 1982	
Mr Hampton	1977, 1978, 1980
School closures	1982
Mr Colle	1979
Mr David Johnson	1979
Arts and cultural funding	1981
Mrs Elliott	1981
Mrs Bassett	1981
Special education	1981
Mrs McLeod	1981
Mr David Johnson	1981
Occupational health and safety	1982
Mr Stewart	1982
Mr Flaherty	1982
Transportation of dangerous goods	1983
Mr Bartolucci	1983
Mr Clement	1983
Transportation of dangerous goods	1984
Mr Duncan	1984
Mr Bartolucci	1985
Mrs Pupaletto	1985
Mrs Ramsay	1985
Mr Gerretsen	1986
Mr Agostino	1986

PETITIONS

Transportation of dangerous goods	1984
Mr Duncan	1984
Mr Bartolucci	1985
Mrs Pupaletto	1985
Mrs Ramsay	1985
Mr Gerretsen	1986
Mr Agostino	1986

OTHER BUSINESS

Legislative pages	1975
The Speaker	1975
Order of business	1983
Mr Hampton	1983
Mr Sterling	1984, 1987
Mr Bradley	1984
Agreed to	1987

SECOND READINGS

Back to School Act, 1998, Bill 62, <i>Mr David Johnson</i>	1993
Mr David Johnson	1988, 1993
Mr Duncan	1992
Mr Marchese	1992
Mr O'Toole	1993
Mr Curtling	1993
Mrs McLeod	2004, 2004
1994, 2004	
Mr Agostino	2000
Mr Bartolucci	2001
Mr Wildman	2003, 2004, 2012
Mr Froese	2003, 2012
Mr Gerretsen	2003
Mr Silipo	2003
Mr Hampton	2009
Mr Skarica	2011
Mr Bradley	2012
Mr Komos	2012
Agreed to	2013

ROYAL ASSENT

The Lieutenant Governor	1986
PROSTATE CANCER	
Mr Cleary	1985
Hospital restructuring	1984
Mr Arnott	1984
Protection for health care workers	1984

continued overleaf

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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 28 September 1998

Lundi 28 septembre 1998



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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 28 septembre 1998

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 28 September 1998

*Report continued from volume A.
1905 House in committee of the whole.*

BACK TO SCHOOL ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 SUR LE RETOUR À L'ÉCOLE

Consideration of Bill 62, An Act to resolve labour disputes between teachers' unions and school boards and to amend the Education Act with respect to instructional time / Projet de loi 62, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail opposant des syndicats d'enseignants et des conseils scolaires et modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne les heures d'enseignement.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Mr Chair, I would ask for unanimous consent of the committee to provide that at the end of the two hours allotted to us at this stage, you, the Chair, deem all amendments received to have been moved and that all divisions required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession. Therefore, my motion basically says that all of the amendments given to you will be deemed to have been moved. You will call them all and, I guess in our common language, all the votes will be stacked till the end.

The First Deputy Chair (Mr Bert Johnson): Is it agreed? Agreed.

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): Mr Chair, I understand that it's my task at this point then to list the amendments. Is that what you'd like me to do at this point?

The First Deputy Chair: That's right.

Hon David Johnson: We do have an amendment to subsection 17(2) of the bill. Do you want me to read that amendment or do you just want me to list it?

Mr Bud Wildman (Algonia): On a point of order, Mr Chair: We don't have the government amendments.

Hon David Johnson: They are being distributed as we wait yours.

Mr Wildman: By whom? I believe both opposition parties gave the government our amendments. We don't have yours.

Hon David Johnson: Who has the amendments?

The First Deputy Chair: Would you give me a minute and I'll find out. While we're getting these sorted out, can you give us the sections that you will be amending.

Hon David Johnson: You'll recollect that the reasons for these amendments all pertain to the fact that the

government has agreed to sever the bill. Part II of the bill has come out. So all of the amendments, which total three in number, pertain to the fact that part II of the bill has been severed. There is a reference from the main part of the bill, from part I of the bill, into part II, so that obviously has to be dealt with. That is an amendment dealing with subsection 17(2) of the bill and that simply is there again because of the fact that part II of the bill has been taken away and there has to be an allowance for that. I'll also say that sections 21 and 22 of the bill obviously now are part of the severed part. If you look in the bill as it was originally drafted, part II, which is being severed, includes sections 21 and 22. We have an amendment dealing with that, recommending that we vote against that, so that effectively severs those parts. Finally, the last recommendation, an amendment that reflects in the long title. Those are the three amendments which, as I understand it, are now being distributed, are they?

Mr Wildman: Yes.

Hon David Johnson: We have provided 14 copies in French and English. I guess all the members now have the copies.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): I want to outline our amendments. We have an amendment to move that the preamble of the bill be struck out, since the preamble is not relevant to the substance of the bill but is a political statement. Will that be placed first or last in the order of amendments?

The First Deputy Chair: Last.

Mrs McLeod: That's a given?

The First Deputy Chair: That's the rule.

Mrs McLeod: We will further move that subsection 10(1) of the bill be struck out and we will be moving a substitution to that section.

Mr Wildman: We will be moving that subsections 10(5), (6) and (7) be struck out.

Mr Wildman: We will be moving that subsections 12 (1) and (2) of the bill be struck out and we will be moving a substitution for those subsections.

Mr Wildman: We will be moving that subsection 14(6) be struck out.

Mr Wildman: We will be moving that section 17 of the bill be struck out in its entirety.

Mr Wildman: We will be moving that subsection 17(4) of the bill be struck out, should by any chance our previous amendment deleting the entire section not be supported.

the board as permitted by section 86 of the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and communicated to the bargaining agent or the members of the bargaining unit, continue to apply to them."

That may sound like legalese, but it's important to go back to the background paper which the ministry provided in presenting the original draft legislation, in which it was made absolutely clear that what this clause means is that the terms and conditions of salaries and benefits which would have existed on Friday, September 25, 1998, at noon, will continue to apply as teachers are back in the classrooms. Those salary and benefit conditions of the existing contracts will continue to apply during the period of arbitration, of course pending any arbitrator's award. What is allowed under this clause is that the working conditions of teachers can be unilaterally altered by the board of education and those altered working conditions would be in effect during a period of arbitration. It's not as clear later on in the bill as to whether or not the arbitrator can alter those unilaterally changed working conditions. That perhaps is a point on which we can seek clarification when we get to the constraints on the arbitrator. But our concern with this particular section of the bill is that it quite clearly allows contract stripping in the area of working conditions, unilateral contract stripping on the part of boards of education. I think the government was being quite forthcoming in its backgrounder to make it clear that it was the working conditions which boards were going to be allowed to change.

This is unprecedented in back-to-work legislation. In the 10 situations in which the ERC has ruled on jeopardy and in which back-to-work legislation has been introduced in this House — and it is on only 10 occasions in the last 23 years under Bill 100 that they have had back-to-work legislation — in no situation has there been contract stripping as the terms and conditions under which the teachers go back into the classroom.

I don't know if the government was trying to give some acknowledgment of that by allowing existing salaries and benefits in the contracts to be the basis for teachers' return to the classroom under this legislation, but it's quite clear that there is a further stripping of contracts allowed in the change in working conditions.

I know that the government has tried to introduce contract stripping as a basis for return-to-work legislation before, specifically in the Lennox-Addington legislation. That was removed because the opposition parties refused to give unanimous consent to back-to-work legislation which included contract stripping. We feel equally strongly that contract stripping is not an appropriate basis on which to prepare the ground for an arbitration. We are recommending with our amendment that the collective agreement, in all of its respects that were in place as of December 31, 1997, continue to apply. Obviously, those are the terms and conditions under which teachers have been teaching and working since the new boards came into effect on January 1, 1998. If the suggestion here is that there's a great deal of confusion — because I think in two

We will further move that subsection 17(6) of the bill be struck out and we'll be moving a substitution, again assuming that our earlier motion which would delete all of section 17 would not have been approved by committee of the whole.

That would complete our amendments.

Mr Wildman: We have amendments to sections 10, 12, 17 and 18.

The first is to delete subsection 10(5).

We change wording to clause 12(1)(b).

We would remove 17. Failing the acceptance of that amendment, we would then move to delete subsections 17(3) and (6).

In section 18, we would move that subsection(3) be deleted.

The First Deputy Chair: Any questions or comments on sections 1 through 9?

Shall sections 1 through 9 carry?

All those in favour say "aye."

Mrs McLeod: On a point of order, Mr Chair: Even though we are not moving amendments to particular subsections, can we ask questions of clarification from the government on a particular subsection?

The First Deputy Chair: Yes, you can. I already asked for them and I'm now to the vote but —

Mrs McLeod: Is it too late for me then to ask one question of clarification on one section?

The First Deputy Chair: Yes.

Mrs McLeod: It's subsection (6), if I may ask the Minister of Education. It says, "The board may not alter terms or conditions of employment" —

The First Deputy Chair: I'm sorry. My answer to your question "Is it too late?" was, yes, it is.

Mrs McLeod: Oh.

The First Deputy Chair: Shall sections 1 through 9 carry?

All those in favour say "aye."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. It is carried.

The first amendment is a Liberal motion, subsection 10(1).

Mrs McLeod: I move that subsection 10(1) of the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"Terms of employment

"(1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), until a new collective agreement is made with respect to a scheduled bargaining unit, the terms and conditions of employment that applied in respect of the members of the unit on December 31, 1997 continue to apply to them."

It's important to understand the significance of this amendment by understanding what is in the original bill. In the original bill, subsection 10(1) says, "Subject to subsections (2), (3) and (5), until a new collective agreement is made with respect to a scheduled bargaining unit, the terms and conditions of employment that applied in respect of the members of the unit at which this legislation would be forthcoming," including any changes made by

cases of the scheduled boards affected by this legislation they are amalgamated boards and they would have had a number of different contracts coming into the amalgamation — I suggest that should not be a concern for the government for two reasons. One is that indeed those boards were amalgamated, took office, on January 1, 1998, and the teachers in those boards have been working with that disparity, presumably, in contracts from January 1, 1998. That's one reason for not feeling as though we have to somehow allow a contract stripping to have uniformity across an amalgamated board.

The other reason is that the government has clearly recognized that there will continue to be some disparity in amalgamated boards in the salaries and benefits area since there is no new agreement; therefore, there has been no own legislation said that when it comes to salaries and benefits, the existing contract is the basis under which the teachers will go back into the classroom. They differentiate around working conditions only. I feel very strongly that that is not a legitimate area in which to differentiate. We cannot support contract stripping. We believe that in any fair arbitration, back-to-work legislation, employees would be returned on the basis of the existing contracts or agreements that had been worked out, and that is the substance of our amendment.

Mr. Wildman: We would support the amendment. I just point out to the government, as my friend from Fort William did, that his predecessor as minister brought in legislation in the Lennox and Addington dispute which initially attempted to do what this does, and that is to allow the board, which had wanted to change the terms and conditions subsequent to the previous contract running out, to have that as the starting point for the arbitration rather than starting at the previous contract terms and conditions. At that point, while the opposition parties — my friend from Fort William and I — had indicated that we would not hold up that legislation, we made it very clear that if the government wished to have expeditious passage, we could not support that. The minister's predecessor withdrew that and said, "Fine, we will make the point at which we start in terms of an arbitration." That seemed far more reasonable, and I don't understand why we are now having to argue this matter again when I thought the ministry learned its lesson in the Lennox and Addington dispute.

Hon. David Johnson: I simply point out that the clauses taken together — and I think they've been referenced by the previous two speakers — do provide protection in terms of the compensation and the benefits to the teachers in the sense that the bill before us tonight would protect the salary and the benefits at least at the level of the previous contract. If an interim contract or some sort of interim arrangement had been made, it must be respected, but at least at the level of the previous contract. In terms of the employment conditions, the contracts have expired. Under the terms and conditions of the

Labour Relations Act, the employer does have the right to set terms and conditions. What we are doing in this legislation is to freeze those terms and conditions at the level the employer has implemented as of last Friday so that no further changes could be made at this point. There is a certain protection in that for the teachers.

Mr. James J. Bradley (St. Catharines): I think the amendment proposed by the Liberal education critic, the member for Fort William, is a supportable one. Her concern is shared by many of us, despite the assurances by the Minister of Education. I think her amendment would provide more comfort, not only for those of us in the House but for those who would face the consequences of this legislation.

What we're concerned about is unilateral contract stripping. When negotiation takes place, as you would know, there is give and take. One side may feel that it gains in a specific area and it may be prepared to give up in another area certain items. That's the essence of contract bargaining when you have that going on in negotiation. In this case, there's the appearance that that would not happen, of course, that unilaterally the board could impose conditions — we refer to that as contract stripping — which would be detrimental to one side in the negotiation process.

Two members now have mentioned the Lennox and Addington circumstance, where there was an attempt by a previous Minister of Education to include that in legislation and a withdrawal of that particular attempt by that minister, I think wisely, when he recognized that it would significantly slow down the process within this House and the return to the classroom would take significantly longer.

That isn't necessarily the case tonight, because there's an agreement that the legislation shall pass at a certain time this evening. But I certainly believe that the amendment by the member for Fort William would give the kind of comfort I would like to see so we don't have unilateral contract stripping taking place, particularly where there are amalgamated boards and there's not yet a collective agreement for the amalgamated board where you have two or three boards — most of the time it's two but there may be some where there are three or parts of three boards — put together and they have different provisions within their contract. I'm certainly very supportive of the amendment by the member for Fort William.

Mrs. McLeod: I would point out to the minister that he's being distinguishous at best to suggest that we don't understand that the legislation you have before us is legal or that boards legally can change the terms and conditions of employment once they get beyond a particular period of time. That was also true in the Lennox-Addington situation, although they were negotiating under Bill 100. There was also a provision that the boards could unilaterally change the terms and conditions of the contract if it was beyond a particular period of time.

That's not the issue here, because under those circumstances, while the boards have the ability to unilaterally change the contract, the employees also have the ability to

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

The vote is deferred.

The next one is an NDP motion to subsection 10(5).

Mr Wildman: I move that subsection 10(5) of the act

be deleted.

Despite what appeared to be a very reasonable expla-

nation a moment ago from the minister, basically what he

said at that point was that if there were a dispute and if

one of the parties, in this case the members of the bar-

gaining unit, believed that the board had gone further than

regulations, then the option was judicial review or a griev-

ance arbitrator. Frankly, all that means to me is that we

are going to end up with a whole lot of grievances and that

you may have a number of court cases as well to resolve

these problems.

It's our view that if we're going to go to binding arbi-

tration within 30 days to begin and it's going to be com-

pleted within 90 days, the board should not be able to

make changes. We should leave it to the parties. The

board and the bargaining unit representing the teachers

should go to the arbitration and make their presentations,

make their proposals, and the arbitrator should decide

what is reasonable, rather than allowing the board to

unilaterally make changes that they might deem to comply

with the Education Act and/or its regulations and then

have a dispute about it that might lead to grievances or

court cases. Just don't let them do it; let the arbitrator

decide.

Mrs McLeod: We have a further motion, which I'll be

moving in the next round, which would delete not only

subsection (5) but the next two subsections, but I'll speak

to my colleague's motion on subsection (5).

Again I have to say that the minister is being perhaps

deliberately disingenuous on this in suggesting that the

only thing the boards can do in their contract stripping is

what would be necessary to respond and obey the law of

the land, since the law of the land are the amendments to

the Education Act, which is essentially Bill 160. I don't

think I need to remind the minister that when we talk

about the Education Act and the regulations made under it,

unless I'm mistaken, the regulations made under it include

the funding formula and the requirement that every board

live within the limitations of the funding formula and that

boards not run a deficit. I believe further that Bill 160

allows you as the minister, if you have any concerns about

the board's ability to manage its finances, to step in and

essentially take control of the board.

I know that trustees are facing a tremendous dilemma

right now. They're facing the dilemma of not being able to

reach what they would consider to be fair and reasonable

settlements, to provide adequately for the students in their

schools as they would see fit, and still live within the

limitations of your funding formula. They also know that

if they're not able to respond and obey, if I quote you once

again, you are going to come in with your heavy hand and

essentially replace the boards. Many trustees believe that

this is what you've wanted to do all along and that really

all of what we've seen in the name of so-called improve-

ments to quality of education have been, first of all, about

cost-cutting and, second, about preparing the ground for a

situation in which you set boards up for failure and are

able to step in and essentially replace the boards.

1940

Minister, you have to recognize that what's happening

out there in the collective bargaining scenarios is that

boards are looking at your funding formula, looking at the

requirements of Bill 160 in terms of the 1,250 minutes of

instructional time — and let's be clear, this is the working

condition that we're all talking about — and saying, "We

can't meet just the letter of your law with 1,250 min-

utes and still live within your funding formula." There are

huge inconsistencies between your funding formula as it

affects a great many boards and the requirement under

Bill 160. If you're following the actual collective bar-

gaining situations in different boards at all, you will know

that there are boards that are sitting down at the table and

saying, "We have no choice but to go beyond the 1,250

minutes of instructional time. We have to schedule teach-

ers to teach seven out of eight classes," which is beyond

what your bill requires. Trustees are saying that they have

no choice in that because if they don't schedule seven out

of eight, they cannot afford to pay the bills because you're

not giving them enough money to pay the rest of the bills.

In the boards where they are getting settlements, they

are literally sitting down and going over the board budget,

with your funding formula in hand, as much as they know

about it, and they are looking at what other areas of class-

room services can be reduced in order to allow the 1,250

minutes to be scheduled and still live within your funding

formula.

boards and teachers alike, regretfully perhaps, reluc-

tantly, have accepted the letter of the law around the 1,250

minutes of instructional time. There may be some concerns

about how that's to be implemented. You know — maybe

you don't know. We asked the question at estimates

repeatedly about how you could schedule 1,250 minutes

in a semester school and kept getting the answer back,

"Of course, you can." In fact, you can't. Boards don't

know how to schedule it and they're probably going to

have to move to non-semestered schools in order to ac-

commodate this. But the greater and more immediate

problem is what has to be cut out if you're actually going

to have teachers teaching the 1,250 minutes and not

something considerably in excess of that. That's the issue.

What subsection (5) speaks to then is the ability of

boards to unilaterally — you're giving them a gift, in your

mind presumably — unilaterally alter the working condi-

tions which, under the terms of the Education Act and the

regulations made under it, include meeting the requirement

not to run a deficit. You're saying to boards: "Here's your

way of doing it, folks. For at least the period in which the

arbitrator is acting" — and we're not sure about what

comes after — "you can put your teachers back teaching

seven out of eight," well beyond the 1,250 that they are

required by your bill to teach, "and you'll save enough

money in that process in order to manage to run your programs without a deficit." That's exactly why you're putting this in here, Minister. At least, I hope that's the reason, because any other reason would be much more Machiavellian. It would be because you're trying to force the boards to mandate seven out of eight in the hopes that that's going to stay, and that's really what your goal has been all along.

Hon Mr Johnson: Just to respond to the member opposite, I will say that most taxpayers don't consider it Machiavellian that governments would balance their budgets. Whether it's local governments, provincial governments, federal government, school boards, Hydro commissions, whether it's any other government entity, I would suggest to you that the vast majority of the citizens of Ontario would consider it only prudent planning that indeed any of the above would actually balance their budgets. Indeed, there's a huge concern when any level of government runs a deficit, runs up debt over a period of time and has not got the ability to pay that off, or greatly jeopardizes future services by running up a particular debt.

I don't take any particular shame in saying to you that there are many aspects that we have put forward, quality aspects, but there is also the aspect requiring boards to plan for a balanced budget. That only makes good common sense. Frankly, this government that we represent here tonight, the provincial government, should do exactly the same thing. It should plan to balance the budget. I don't have any fear that at the appropriate point not only will we do that but that will be a legislated responsibility, as it is in many other governments, a requirement that the government plan to balance its budget.

In terms of the other quality aspects, though, that I think you allude to that Bill 160, for example, has introduced, the average class size cap is one that I'm particularly proud of, because over the years the reality has been that at the elementary level in particular the average class size has gone up each and every year through the period. As one example, look at the average class size across Ontario from 1991 to 1997. Each and every year, without exception, the average class size has risen in Ontario. We have put a cap on that to one that so that can't happen, and I must say again that one of the contributing factors has been that the collective agreements that have been negotiated through that period of time contributed to the growth in the average class size across the province.

During that same period of time, 1991 to 1997, although not as continuously, the average class sizes at the secondary level have also increased so that we have the reality of both the elementary and secondary class sizes being higher in 1997 than they were in 1991. I'm pretty sure parents will unanimously say that if that happens year after year, then that cannot be good for the quality of education. If the larger class sizes get larger, the smaller class sizes get larger, the average class sizes get larger, all class sizes get larger, as has effectively happened in Ontario, then that is not good for education in the province.

though, and they are important to this government.

I'm pleased that these are initiatives that have come through, and they are important as well.

days, which is important as well.

and this again is a quality initiative.

These indeed, if they involve money, involve greater amounts of money. Because the average class size is capped, boards are having to reduce the class size, they're having to create smaller classes, more classes, and it's going to cost more money. But we are happy, through that funding formula that the member opposite alluded to, to provide those extra monies, because it is a quality initiative of this government that the average class size should not carry on growing, and indeed we have provided the money to fund it, as we do for the number of instructional days, which is important as well.

Mr Bradley: The minister has raised some interesting matters regarding this particular amendment. I want to recall to him that the day he was bringing in his so-called final amendments to Bill 160 he was asked in the hallway — and I'm sure this is on tape so the minister can't escape this — how many teaching positions he thought would disappear in Ontario. My recollection was that his guess-timate was 7,500. What the minister was actually doing on that day was conceding that Bill 160 was all about withdrawing funding from the education system so that the effect would be approximately 7,500 fewer teaching positions. If we look at the funding formula that the minister came forward with, that is going to be borne out. I know he will say that there are some teachers who are leaving the system voluntarily, whether it's through retirement or for other reasons, and that there will be some new teachers replacing them, but netting it out, the minister's estimate on that day was in fact 7,500 teaching positions.

1950

The member for Fort William indicated that what appears to be happening is the government again trying to discredit a public institution so that it can come forward with a radical solution to the crisis or problem that it creates in the first place. A good example of that, together with education, would be in the hospital sector, where if you take enough money out of the hospital sector and they can't do their job properly, then it will militate in favour of people accepting what I call crackpot realism; that is, we must punish ourselves. Whether it's schools or hospitals, we must have fewer and we must punish ourselves for having had a quality system, whether it's health or it's education.

The only way in which boards of education faced with providing services to students in an area can balance the budget is by cutting expenditures in a specific area, expenditures which are designed ultimately to benefit the stu-

den in that system. They have no other option since you decided that you are not going to be providing what the boards of education and parents in the area would consider to be sufficient funds.

You mentioned the average class size. I had a telephone call from a teacher at Lakeport Secondary School in St Catharines who informed me that in the next semester he would have 41 students in a class. You like to give the impression out there that somehow we're going to have 22 students in every classroom. You almost in a whisper mention "average of 22 per classroom." What we're seeing is that where there are students with special needs, where there might be a class of nine or 10 or 11 students with special needs, that is going to be balanced off by classes such as this one in the next round, that is, the next semester, of 41 students. You can't blame the board of education for that.

Also, I must tell you that you have done under this formula is remove others who have provided essential services to the education system, fired them out the door. The member for Algoma mentions those who are responsible for the cleaning of schools and how we've now decided that we're not going to do as much cleaning. There are people who were audiovisual technicians who were fired holus-bolus from boards of education, and other services which directly benefit students. But with your prevented having funding provided for those particular groups.

You'll recall — because the minister mentioned this, I had to clarify this for the minister — that during the negotiations over Bill 160 that in fact the teachers' federations conceded to you that there would be more time in the classroom. They said they would extend the day. They said they would eliminate certain other times so you could meet that requirement. But what the government really wanted was fewer teaching positions, and that's why you didn't accept that. It was a very deft and appropriate move on the part of the federations at that time to say, "If you want this, here's how we can achieve it." But how you intend to achieve it is by eliminating teaching positions and having fewer teachers working with students in this province.

If your government would be simply honest and up front about it and say, "What we wanted to do was get rid of 7,500 teaching positions," I wouldn't agree with that, but at least I would give you marks for honesty and being up front instead of trying to fool people out there into trying to believe that there are going to be more teachers in the system and therefore more contact with the students. I think the amendment that is proposed is a very reasonable amendment, and I hope the government, in the spirit of co-operation and recognizing the wisdom of the amendment, will be prepared to support it this evening.

Mr Wildman: I appreciate the comments of my friend from St Catharines. In response to the minister's comments in which he said that everyone would support the idea of balancing budgets, I just point out to him that this

government, under Bill 160, has taken complete control over the budget away from the boards. Essentially, the government is now preventing boards from raising any tax revenue; the government has decided that it will control the total amount of money each board has. So it's a little bit unfair for the minister to stand here and say that all this requires is that boards be responsible and balance their budgets.

If the government, through its non-funding formula, its defunding formula, lowers the amount of money that a public district school board gets and then turns around and says, "You're responsible for balancing the budget," obviously what the government is saying to that board is, "This board needs to cut" — and not just administration. As I pointed out, it's cleaning the schools, for instance, or changing the terms and conditions in terms of how many students there are in a classroom or how many minutes the teacher will teach or how many classes the teacher will

The government also goes around saying — and the minister alluded to this — that Bill 160 requires more time for teachers to be with students. In fact it means fewer teachers with more students; spending more time in front of the students, that's true, but it means less individual time per student for each teacher. The minister knows it. He won't admit it, but he knows it.

If you're talking about a semestered system — and many secondary schools across Ontario are semestered — the minister knows he's not talking about 25 more minutes a day; he's talking in many cases of an hour to 75 more minutes a day, teaching four out of four, not seven out of eight. He knows it, and he knows that's why, unfortunately, we have so few extracurricular activities this year, if any. If somebody is teaching four out of four, that individual doesn't have time to do any preparation during the day so will do it in the evenings, when that individual might have been carrying out rehearsals for the choir or the band or doing basketball or football practice.

If the government really believes this is simply to allow boards to comply with the Education Act, the government should be properly funding the boards so they can comply with average class sizes by hiring the number of teachers required to do it, instead of putting them in the contradictory situation of requiring them to have more teachers to meet the average class sizes but at the same time giving them a funding formula that requires them to have fewer teaching positions.

Hon David Johnson: On that last point, I assure the member for Algoma that the funding formula was created with the average class sizes in mind. The boards are funded for the average class size of 25 at the elementary and 22 at the secondary. That's the basis for the funding formula.

The member has commented on extracurricular activities. I consider it most unfortunate that in some boards the extracurricular activities have been reduced or curtailed or eliminated. The requirement of the government put forward through Bill 160 is simply that teachers be asked to spend four hours and 10 minutes in the classroom. Some

you see the audited reports of the province of Ontario and tell me if I'm wrong, because I have that confidence.

The member for St Catharines mentioned the special needs. He said he knows a teacher who has a classroom of 41 students. My guess is that we all know teachers who have classrooms of 41 students. That's what we're trying to stop. The Liberal government did nothing about it and the NDP did nothing about it. We have taken the first step. The first step is to halt the growth. We have done that. We have capped the average class size. Is that the end of the story? I'll say it isn't, absolutely not. But it's the first step. Without the cap, that class size of 41 would probably have been 42 or 43. The large classes would be larger, the small classes would be larger. But we have halted that growth.

The member for St Catharines said: "How do they get their average class size? They calculate in the special needs class of eight or nine." The member of staff from education whispered to me, "That's not true." He said that the special needs classes are not considered in the calculation of the average class sizes. I said to the staff member, "It doesn't matter. I have said that till I'm blue in the face, that the special needs classes are not calculated in the calculation that creates the average class size." I told him: "I'll say it once again here today, but it won't matter. I can say it 100 times a day, but I'll get that thrown back at me even though it's not correct."

I'll say it once again. The special needs classes are not included in the calculation of the average class size. Now, if there is a special needs student in a regular class, obviously that's part of the calculation, yes. But the special education class of eight or nine students that the member for St Catharines was alluding to is not included. I'll say it once again. I'm going to look directly at the member for St Catharines because I know the member is a fair and reasonable person and he at least will not indicate that fact in the House. He will not say that back in the House again, my having looked him square in the eye and told him that. I'm counting on him because he's a fair and reasonable guy.

One last comment to the member for Fort William, which I forgot. She alluded to the fact that the province could step in and take over school boards under certain conditions. Those conditions would be, for example, if the school board was in default. Being a former Minister of Education, she would know that that has been a provision of the Municipal Act dating back to what, 1935 or thereabouts. That was a provision in the Municipal Act dating back to 1935. We took it out. We said, "Should that be in the Municipal Act?" Because it's an education matter that has to do with the default of school boards, it shouldn't be in the Municipal Act but in the Education Act. All we did was pull it out of the Municipal Act. It's the same stuff, we pulled it out of the Municipal Act and put it in the Education Act, but it's been in effect for over 60 years.

I guess the question is, if it works in the other provinces, why can't it work here in Ontario? Why can't the four hours and 10 minutes work here in the province of Ontario? That's a question I haven't heard answered yet at this point. That's simply what we're asking to do.

The member for Algoma has asked if we are giving boards the monies to run. I said in the House earlier today and I'll tell you again in the House at this time that there will be more money spent in the elementary and secondary school systems in this school year than has ever been spent before in the history of the province. There will be more money spent; there will be more money spent in the classroom per student.

Mrs McLeod: I don't think so.

Hon David Johnson: I can tell you that's the case. If the members opposite want to argue and debate in favour of administration and bureaucracy, if that's where the Liberal Party and the NDP think the money should be spent, then we have a difference of opinion. This government stands for putting the money into the classroom.

There will be more monies in the classroom and there will be more monies in general in the system in Ontario. The better part of \$15 billion of taxpayers' money, money from all sources, will be spent going into the elementary and secondary systems this year. But part of that total picture will be the administration and bureaucracy, and that will be reduced. You know, I don't think there are going to be too many people in the province of Ontario who will shed a tear for that. Maybe the Liberals don't like to see less spending on bureaucracy and administration, maybe the NDP don't like to see the bureaucracy and the administration reduced, but I think most people in the province of Ontario will say: "Right on. Focus the money where it should be focused: in the classroom." That's where it's going to be.

There will be more money for teachers, more money for supply teachers, more money for textbooks, more money for the paraprofessionals to help — the speech pathologists, for example — more money for guidance and library teachers. All the expenditures in the classroom will be increased. But yes, I'm sorry to say there will be less money — I'm not really sorry to say it at all, but speaking to the opposition parties, who currently have a problem with this, there will be less money in administration and bureaucracy. I'll tell you once again that the overall spending will be greater. I'll say that here right now and you can quote me on that, and you can come back when

House will be aware that that's the situation with regard

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): I'm pleased to have an opportunity to address this amendment put by the third party and speak in favour of it.

The minister said their government will spend more on classroom education than any government in the past. The minister will be aware that the per student spending will have declined, spending as a percentage of gross provincial product will have declined and classroom spending as a percentage of education spending will have declined in each year of your administration, in each and every year.

Earlier today, the minister spoke about looking at doing literacy tests for high school students who are graduating. I think it would be a good idea for the government to take that test, because the notion of a capped average is an oxymoron. Averages are by definition moving, and to use that kind of imprecise English, I would suggest to the minister, is not misleading but it certainly camouflages the reality. The reality is that you have not capped class sizes. You have not and will not over the course of time reduce the average class sizes. What you have reduced, by your own admission, is the number of teachers.

The other point that needs to be borne in mind is that the amount of time a teacher has available for students is declining and will have declined in each year of your administration because classroom spending is not your priority. Cutting is your priority. Tax cuts are your priority. Multi-million dollar advertising campaigns are your priority.

I'm sure people across Ontario received those nice foldouts that you can put up on your wall that have absolutely no bearing on good quality education and have everything to do with top-grade propaganda. It's a shame you didn't take the million dollars you've wasted this year and the million dollars you wasted last year and put it into the purchase of new textbooks. That way it would have raised the average amount you spent on students to some kind of respectable limit. You spent less than \$30 per student on textbooks and are trying to camouflage that as some kind of major initiative — this after two successive years of capital cuts, cuts to your budget.

The minister has talked about administrative efficiencies. I met with our directors of education over the summer and I met with our teachers' federations. I would submit to the minister that subsection 10(1) and this section, taken together, are going to be an administrative nightmare. What do you do in situations where boards in some instances will be dealing with two and three collective agreements under the same roof, where you'll have a teacher in one classroom making one wage and a teacher in another classroom making another wage? I submit, Minister, that you'll be spending a lot more on lawyers, on accountants, on bargaining, on all kinds of non-essential items that the Tory consultants will be very happy about. I suggest that 10(5) is a very clear attempt to strip collective agreements, because you have cornered school boards. Not only have you not increased administrative

This is a blatant attempt by the government to get itself out of yet another mess it has created. What they propose to do is to allow, for the period the arbitrator is in place — up to 120 days, as I understand the legislation — collective agreements to be stripped. That's an inappropriate response and I think the minister ought to set the record straight with respect to what the real effect of his cuts on the education system has been. This minister and his predecessor in four successive budget years have reduced the amount of money available, no matter how you measure it. You can play games around absolutes versus percentages, but no matter how you cut it and no matter what you compare it to, this jurisdiction lags and falls behind continually.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I'd like to join the debate at this point to say some things about the current situation. I was moved to do so by some mail I've received in the last few days but also by the minister's comments tonight.

Unlike my friend from Fort William, I have been a Minister of Education, and I have some sympathy for the situation in which the current minister finds himself. But I have to say, Minister, that I've been watching with some interest over the last number of days and weeks as the current situation has evolved, and I was struck by some comments you made earlier tonight, a very Clintonian use of data and language.

I've been through most of the schools in my electoral district in the last couple of weeks. Broadly speaking, my country ought to benefit by your funding formula. I'm told by my public and separate boards that we're neutral to slightly positive in global terms. But the problem is that the devil is in the detail. When I was at Opeongo High School in rural Renfrew county last week, I was having caretakers telling me about the problems they were having because of the rigidity of that formula. I had 300 students talk to me about their concern about the loss of their extra-curricular opportunities. I had teachers, some of whom have been lifetime supporters of the Progressive Conservative Party, telling me that they were furious at the persistent and pernicious attacks led by Mike Harris on their profession. They had heard his speech to the banquet of the Toronto chamber of commerce last Tuesday night, a premeditated assault by the Premier yet again on the integrity of the teaching profession. Some of my Tory friends say, "Oh, that's not what he intended." Let me tell you,

the people of Ontario who heard the press reports of that speech heard it as part of a pattern. Not for the first time have Mike Harris and friends gone out of their way to put gasoline on a fire.

The minister said a moment ago, "You know, we're putting more money into the schools," and he made some passing reference to textbooks. CBC television news reported tonight very authoritatively on the subject of the textbook story, and I'm sure you'll be seeing that tomorrow. My colleague from Fort William was saying months ago that there was something amiss with the plan, and CBC news reports tonight that there is a lot amiss with the plan. Apparently school boards have been stiffed by the Ministry of Education to the tune of 25% in some cases for the textbooks. It was a very clear report tonight by Robin Smythe, chapter and verse, of school boards that were getting stiffed with —

Interjection: I'm sure it was wrong.

Mr Conway: My friend says it's all wrong. You can tell the people of Ontario how it's wrong. The point I'm getting at is whether it's textbooks, whether it's students,

whether it's —

Interjections.

Mr Conway: You see, they don't like this because it's not part of the propaganda campaign. As long as you've got \$6.5 million worth of the taxpayers' money to go over the heads of everybody else through television and the daily press, of course you can set the agenda and people don't talk back — \$6.5 million about all the things you're doing.

There are school boards in this province that are being consolidated, and I'll tell you there'll be more than a few school boards that for this year and a few years to come are actually going to be spending more money pensioning off a variety of people made redundant by your legislation. The fact of the matter is that it will be several years down the road before you start to see the so-called savings that you're already broadcasting. I'm sure some of my friends opposite know the stories because I have heard a number of them. It would make sense. Any of you who have ever been through a significant reorganization know exactly what happens. You've got five school boards that become two, you've got four that become two. You've got to pension people off, you've got buyouts, you've got a variety of other forces at work that cost you money in the early going. We'll never get a true audit of that, but the fact of the matter is that in the early going you will be spending money to pension people off to get to the point you want to be down the road.

I've had over the last few days teachers, and I'm going to mention a couple because they were apoplectic: Mrs Donna McHutcheon from Noik Drive in Permbroke phoned me the other day, and she was infuriated that her tax money is being taken and spent to the tune of \$6.5 million to campaign against herself and her profession. She finds that deeply offensive, as she should.

Let's not kid ourselves. That's what we're all about in this. This is the war that Mike Harris and his ideological

2020

Interjections.

Mr Conway: Let me be very bipartisan. I say this very seriously.

Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex): A leader of your party. Mr Conway: He is a former leader, and he's a disgrace to my party. Because the political establishment couldn't do anything about him, look at the price they're now paying.

But I say to this minister and to this government, if you think for one moment that you have a hope in hell of any constructive engagement and implementation of your new policy if, as and when, or if as you continue to attack the teachers, you'd better think twice, you'd better think thrice, because it's not going to happen. All I know is that in Renfrew, when I'm at the Cobden public school or at

Every generation can make a damning indictment of the public schools, and of course we have an obligation to make them better, but we are not going to make the system better if you or anyone else thinks that a consistent, persistent and pernicious attack on the system itself and the 120,000 teachers in those classrooms is going to be part of a constructive solution. Think about it. You've got one minister and 120,000 teachers.

I will give the government credit. A number of the initiatives undertaken in the area of curriculum reform are right and proper steps, and they should be supported by all sensible, thinking people — I certainly support them — but you must understand that if those initiatives are going to be effectively implemented, it is only going to be with the support and the willingness and the involvement of the teachers. Are there some bad teachers? Yes, just like there are bad politicians like Andy Thompson.

Neatby's famous treatise about the state of public schooling in the 1940s.

Every generation can make a damning indictment of the public schools, and of course we have an obligation to make them better, but we are not going to make the system better if you or anyone else thinks that a consistent, persistent and pernicious attack on the system itself and the 120,000 teachers in those classrooms is going to be part of a constructive solution. Think about it. You've got one minister and 120,000 teachers.

right-wingers have wanted for years. The war has come. In this case hundreds of thousands of students are at issue, and I think the House as a body has got to feel some very real sympathy and regard for those people. None of us will be disappointed that those students are going to be back in class as soon as possible. But I say to the warmongers, to the ideologues, that this war which was so easy to start will, like a fire in a pine bush, burn on well past your tenure in this place if we're not careful.

Yes, it's a hell of a lot easier to start a war than to end a war, and this is for many of us, particularly those of us who grew up with an understanding of how important public education is to a free and democratic society — I have the benefit of living in eastern Ontario, so we get the revealed wisdom of the new right daily from the editorial pages of the Ottawa Citizen where people like Dan Gardiner, who spent time advising this Minister of Education in the early part of his mandate, opine daily as to what the new world order is, and it's very clear that a part of this plan is to attack and undermine the integrity of public education. It couldn't be clearer. How else would you interpret some of what has been happening here? You go out and systematically trash teachers in the public school system. Of course it's not perfect. If you want to find out just how imperfect it is, go to the library and read Hilda Neatby's famous treatise about the state of public schooling in the 1940s.

Fellowes High School or at Bishop Smith school, which schools I was in last week, if there's something wonderful and magical happening, they do not sense it. The schools are not as clean as they used to be, because of the funding formula, because there has been a sharp and deep reduction in our public school boards for the support. We've got school administrators and principals, some of them longtime supporters of your party, who are looking at this and seeing a massive centralization on the likes of which they have not seen in 30 years, and this from a government that

talks about power to the people.

Bill 160 and Bill 62 are about power to the Mowat Block, power to the centre. Some of us like Danford and I represent large rural areas, and if there is going to be a sensible administration of the new policy, there has got to be sufficient flexibility for people in places like Combermere and Maynooth and Chalk River and Killaloe to make good and sensible local decisions. The bean-counters you've got working on this project are looking at the grand plan and assuming that if you had everybody in a group of 10,000, 15,000 or 20,000, a lot of economies of scale would be possible. They're right, but in Ontario north of Highway 7 it doesn't work like this. These rural and small-town and small-city schools require flexibility that is not in the act. Bill 160 or this provision, quite frankly. It is so alluring to say, "Oh, we just want an extra 20 minutes." A-plus to the propagandists who come up with that.

It's like the assessment business, it's revenue-neutral. Unlike some, I'm prepared to say that broadly speaking it probably is, but just tell that to people in the small business sector who are finding out that to make the big discounts for the financial services and the national chains possible, their big benefit, you have to transfer the whopping tax increase to small and medium-sized business. Yes, overall it is revenue-neutral, but the big banks get a big break and the mom-and-pop operations in places like the Pembroke Mall get a kick where it really hurts. But is it revenue-neutral? Probably.

When we talk about the extra 20 or 25 minutes, the propaganda is very alluring, except the devil is in the detail. To make this work, you're going to have to understand that you're going to have to organize schools, not just in Woodstock but in Norwich and in Salford and a number of other small and medium-sized places, and the principal is going to want to have some flexibility that he or she simply does not have in this legislation. I saw in the Globe and Mail the other day a story about some school board in southwestern Ontario that's finding out now what the funding formula, as my friend from Algoma said, means for small schools. Wait, friends, until that dayawns. The bean-counters are assuming that everything is the size of Markham or Leaside. Well, it isn't. There will be one mad scatter around the government caucus when this happy little reality to which my friend from Oakwood was making reference today dayawns on people beyond Highway 7.

I simply say that there are some critical issues at stake. Of course we want the kids back in school, of course we want the kids and the teachers fully engaged in the learn-

ing process, but if that's going to happen, the government is going to have to be less belligerent, less bellicose, less arbitrary. The big bully from North Bay is going to have to suck it up and learn to be diplomatic for once in his life and understand that comments the kinds of which we heard last Tuesday night are not helpful and are calculated to aggravate and to incite, and that's exactly what happened.

Let me tell you, the morale in the schools I was visiting last week was deeply troubling. We can legislate kids back to school and we can put teachers back in the classroom, but presumably we want them there for good reason and good cause. I have my share of lacerations to bear from the teacher union leadership, and I say again I have some personal understanding of a minister's frustration. There were many days when I wanted to be my usual temperate self, but when you get into these kinds of situations, as a minister and as a leader of the government you're not afforded that luxury unless it is your plan to divide, to aggravate and to incite, unless it is your plan to create a condition where people for no good reason lose confidence in the public school system so the door will open to the private school, the charter school, which is something I believe is not in the public interest of Ontario, large or small, north or south, urban or rural.

Hon David Johnson: There have been a number of comments made. Where I'm just a little bit uncertain is around the issue — and this is quite a hard act to follow actually — of incinerating and inciting.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): Sure it is. You got the facts.

Hon David Johnson: I won't speak to the facts because I have a deep regard for the member for Renfrew North, but he makes a lot of colour out of one or two facts and a few other situations in there that he indicates are accounting of the situation, has alluded to the incinerating and the inciting and pine bushes and war. I'm just recalling there was a leader of one of the parties who actually walked a picket line last fall. Did you know that?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour): Who did that?

2030
Hon David Johnson: Which leader? It was an illegal strike, and there was a leader of one of the parties. Most people would say that's incinerating and inciting. My understanding — I must be wrong, but they tell me it was sure that if I'm wrong, one of the Liberals —

Mrs Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): No, it was Howard.

Hon David Johnson: Was it? It was.

Interjection.
Hon David Johnson: Oh, it was both leaders, both the NDP and the Liberals. There you go, then. You have the leader of the NDP walking the picket line and you have the leader of the Liberals walking the picket line.

I'm further told that on another occasion during that same illegal strike there was again a leader of one of the

parties here who was speaking at one of the rallies during that illegal strike, fanning the fires during the illegal strike, incinerating and inciting during that illegal strike.

Intoxications

Hon David Johnson: Again they tell me it was the leader of the Liberal Party who was there. It was probably the NDP as well, was it? It was both parties.

I must have missed this incinerating and inciting on behalf of the Premier, but I don't recall him incinerating and inciting on a picket line at these kinds of — I was there last week. I didn't see the member for Renfrew North at the Premier's speech last week to an audience of about 1,500 people, as I can recall, a very large audience, in which he said that we had excellent teachers in Ontario.

The member for Renfrew North says we have some bad teachers. The Premier didn't say we had anything but excellent teachers in Ontario. I fail to understand how that's inciting and incinerating, to say that we have excellent teachers in Ontario, but he did go on to indicate that the system needed to be fixed.

When we talk about the system, we are talking about the fact that the average class sizes have increased year by year. That makes it more difficult for the teachers; that makes it more difficult for the students. When the average class size goes up year after year, that means all class sizes go up. The smaller class sizes get bigger; the larger class sizes get bigger; the average ones get bigger. It had to be stopped. No other government was willing to stop it, but we've stopped it.

When we speak about the system needing to be fixed, we were looking at the number of instructional days and the fact that our students were not getting the benefit of the same number of instructional days as students from other jurisdictions. That's no fault of the teachers; the teachers are doing the best job they can. But if the teachers are only able to spend 170 days with the students at the secondary level, where in other provinces the teachers can spend 180 days, 10 days more with their students, then how is that fair? That's not fair. If our students are involved in national tests in science and mathematics and they don't score as well as students from, let's say, British Columbia or Alberta, is it any wonder, if our students have 10 days less in instructional time? That's no reflection on the teachers. It's not fair to the students; it's not fair to the teachers. It's something that had to be fixed, and we did. That's what we're referring to when we say the system had to be fixed.

It goes further than that, too. I guess some members don't like the fair funding formula, which allocates resources on a fair and equal basis for the first time in the history of Ontario, where all students, whether they're in rural Ontario or urban Ontario, no matter what sort of board they're in — all members of this House will know that some of the boards had about \$4,700 per student, I think I can recall in some boards, while other boards had about \$7,000 per student to spend. Is that a disparity that we can allow to continue? Isn't that a disparity that we would say is not fair for the students who are only having the benefit of support of \$4,700 or \$5,000, while other

a year.

The issue of the textbooks has been raised. The member for Windsor-Walkerville raised the issue of the textbooks. I guess the CBC did some sort of story on it. I didn't see the story. I can only say that we have guaranteed every board their proportion of the funding. I don't know what the story was at all. I know in some of the French boards the number of French books available was not an adequate supply. We indicated to those boards that they could take a smaller proportion of their allocation but their monies would be protected. Of course there is going to be another RFP that will go out — as a matter of fact, we're in the process of that right now — and in the second part of it they would have a larger allocation so that their total allocation would be protected so they would get the best-quality books.

The initial allocation that we put out involved over 3.2 million books being purchased, which works out to 2.5 or three books per child in Ontario, which I think is unprecedented, because parents are telling me that the number of books in the classroom is nowhere near adequate, that students are sharing books, that some classes have one or

implemented overnight.

There's some criticism that some of the curriculum was introduced — social studies, for example, was introduced very recently. I don't expect the full social studies curriculum to be implemented overnight in our schools. That's a position we've had all along. The teachers have worked long and hard developing this social studies curriculum. I think that's why it's so successful. We've had a team of teachers working on it. They've worked long and hard and it's ready to go. But I'll tell you — and I said this earlier in the House today — if the choice is to put it on the shelf and let it sit there for a year, or to start with the implementation this fall so that our students can start to have the benefit of the new curriculum but recognize that it's going to be phased in over a period of time, then I choose to allow our students at the first opportunity, which is right now, to begin the implementation, fully realizing that they won't have the full impact for months or perhaps

that they won't have the full impact for months or perhaps

That's what happens with a new curriculum. It can't be implemented overnight.

It is going to take a few years to be fully in effect. That's what should be learned.

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two books, that the books are in bad shape, that they're held together by tape or other means. So I think it's unprecedented, but the amount of money involved, some \$68 million, was discounted to \$55 million, a savings of \$13 million, and that \$13 million will be plowed back into the next phase. Science equipment, computer software, more textbooks — we will spend the full \$100 million in this allocation, and it will be to the benefit of the elementary

students in the province.

The member for St Catharines mentioned the 7,500

fewer teachers. I forgot to remark on that last time. I'll have to check and see what the context of that is. We will not have 7,500 fewer teachers in the province of Ontario, and I think everybody in this House knows that. Many boards are out trying to hire new teachers. Particularly at the elementary level, there's no question that this year we'll have more elementary teachers, and boards are trying to hire more and more teachers. If anything, the problem could be finding enough teachers in some boards for them to hire. I did project at one point in time that there would be 7,500 retirements as a result of the early retirement pension plan. It appears that over the course of this year there will actually be 9,000 or 10,000 teachers retiring.

2040

I guess one way of describing that situation is that the

teachers were pensioned off or the teachers were bought off or the teachers were shooed out of the system or whatever. That is completely inaccurate. The early retirement scheme was negotiated by the Ontario Teachers' Federation. The Ontario Teachers' Federation, in conjunction with this government, negotiated that deal. The Ontario Teachers' Federation members had been asking for an early retirement pension for some time because many of the teachers have been teaching for 30, 35 and more years, and in many aspects of business or public life there are early retirement schemes. We agreed. We said that teachers who have reached the 85 factor, a sum of 85 resulting from their number of years of experience and their age — this is paid out of the pension plan and it's a total deal which I —

Mr Gerretsen: You're not paying one cent.

Hon David Johnson: It was a negotiated deal. The point is, there was a negotiated deal with the province of Ontario and the Ontario Teachers' Federation, a plan we were delighted to negotiate to allow those teachers who have worked long and hard, generally about 35 years of

service, to have an early retirement.

It's also an opportunity, I might say, for young teachers to come into the system. I fail to see anything wrong, although I've heard potshots being taken at this here to might, with allowing teachers who have worked long and hard, given years of service and dedication to the teaching profession, to have the opportunity to take that retirement and at the same time to allow young and new teachers an opportunity to come into the system.

If the opposition parties don't feel that the teachers deserve this opportunity, if the opposition parties don't feel that young teachers should have the opportunity to come

into the system, get into the teaching profession, then say

so. Just say so. Say you don't think that long-standing

teachers should have the opportunity for an early retirement. That's certainly not the position of this government,

and we were pleased to deal with the Ontario Teachers' Federation and come to this deal.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): With

regard to the minister's comments about the actual section

that we're talking about, which is subsection 10(5), he

mentioned the word "fair," and I would like to bring him

back to the whole issue of the lack of fairness in the clause

that we are recommending be deleted. It's very short. I'd

like to just read it again.

"Subject to subsections (2) and (3), a scheduled board

may alter the terms and conditions of employment of

members of a scheduled bargaining unit to the extent that

the board considers it necessary to do so...to be able to

comply with the requirements of the Education Act and

the regulations made under it."

Read another way, it would read, "A corporation may

alter the terms and conditions of employment of workers

in the bargaining unit to the extent that the company con-

siders necessary in order to comply with the requirements

of the marketplace."

If you were to compare what's happening in this

instance to what's going on in the private sector, that's

exactly the kind of legislation you'd be proposing. Yet

because it's teachers, one of those groups that you've got

a "special interest" label on, you deem it okay to go after

them in a fashion like this, given the fact that you totally

control, with a majority government, the Education Act

by virtue of majority government, you set the budget; you

decide how much money the board gets. By virtue of the

changes you've made to board structures, they have no

latitude in communities like mine in Hamilton-Wentworth

to have any other means of revenue to offset the kinds of

increased costs that we have in major urban centres.

I've heard from some other members that in the rural

areas perhaps the formulas are working for them, but at

the end of the day your funding formula denies communities

like mine and other major urban centres the ability to

offset the increased pressures which quite frankly your

government agenda is exacerbating. Like poverty, like the

ability of new Canadians to settle into our communities,

because you've cancelled all the programs that used to be

there for them. Those are increases that communities like

mine are having to absorb.

So when we get into a situation of collective bargaining,

under this clause you virtually are micromanaging and

micro-negotiating all the bargaining that's taking place at

every separate bargaining table all across the province.

Then, in your weird version of what fair is, you load up

the law to say that board that's acting at your behalf,

because you handcuffed it financially and legislatively,

now has the ability to unilaterally and arbitrarily change

the collective agreement any way it wants.

It reminds me very much of what the government did

with Bill 7 when they went after OPSEU and took away

money off the backs of teachers. There won't be as many classrooms cleaned. There won't be as many class-rooms where the computers aren't hooked up, because that's outside your funding formula. All those things wouldn't appear if you can take more and more money out of the pockets of teachers and blame them and convince the parents that somehow you have defended the rights of

The reality is that you have hurt the right of teachers to have any kind of fair bargaining process, just like you took away, under Bill 7, the rights of OPSEU members to have legitimate, legal successor rights. You have effectively taken out hundreds of millions of dollars, which makes this a weaker school system. All the spinning in the world isn't going to change that. Anyone who takes the time to read this legislation and look past the headlines will realize that this is all about hamstringing teachers, not helping students.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South): I think it's extremely important, Minister, that you reflect on this opportunity to get inside with the children's needs of this province, because up to now your whole program has been geared to deducting, to taking away from the children who depend on public schools in this province and on the separate school system. Children aren't going to understand why you have relentlessly, through the course of the summer, into the fall, to this point here today, taken it upon yourself to poison the atmosphere in which they have to learn, to try and turn teachers and boards, in some cases wedging in parents, into adversaries over something that has to be worked on, in a human services kind of way, directly and cooperatively on the results that have to be obtained.

You can't point to anything you've done to increase the morale of teachers or the ability of teachers to provide for their students. There isn't a single thing you've done throughout the piece that improves the capacity or capability of the teachers we have in this province. When you do that, you're directly deducting and taking away from children. The number of student contacts they're going to have you are arbitrarily increasing in some central flat way of a type we haven't seen outside the Soviet polit-buro, in terms of the kind of central decision-making you're imposing on every classroom in this province without regard for the particular community needs they have. Particularly in this clause, 10(5), you are allowing one side to impose the conditions and you're basically making them force the teaching staff of this province to fit into a mould you've created. You didn't take care when you made that mould and you're siphoning away their sense of goodwill, their ability to do their job by compelling that to happen, because what you're saying to the boards is, "We won't give you the flexibility or the resources to do a good job," and what you're saying to the teachers is, "You don't have any choice."

I defy you to come up with one instance of where that has actually resulted in conditions of improvement in terms of the fundamentals of teaching, of being able to impart knowledge, of being able to deal with the various

their successor rights. They didn't do it to anybody else. After they made the case that they were a special interest group and that public sector workers are all to be vilified, then they said it was okay to go after them legislatively and take away their rights. You did the same thing to injured workers under Bill 99 and you're doing exactly the same thing with this legislation.

It's not likely we're going to get to it, but it ties in very directly as I'm talking about the impact of these teachers, and I think the teachers are right when they remind us that teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions. So in large part, Minister, when we talk about what happens to teachers vis-à-vis legislative hammers in this place or micromanaging through board control by virtue of your financial leverage, you're deciding on the conditions that our children learn in, not just that those workers — and by the way, they are workers — are working in. You can't separate the two.

When we talk about arbitration, because it is directly linked to the kind of control you want here and moving away from the usual procedures, now you've gone absolutely crazy with this whole idea of ability to pay. Now you're saying to any mediator or arbitrator that they'll have regard to the relevant education funding regulations and Ministry of Education and Training policies. Your control again. Your control, total.

"If the implementation of the award would result in an increase in either the scheduled board's total or the scheduled board's average-per-teacher compensation costs for members of the scheduled bargaining unit, for either the first year or second year...."

"The mediator-arbitrator shall include in the award a written statement" — get this — "explaining how, in his or her opinion, the scheduled board can meet the costs resulting from the award without incurring a deficit...."

So now they're going to write the budget for you if there are to be any changes. This, Minister, is what upsets us the most about what's happening. It's not just that you're ending strikes and lockouts that you caused in the first place, that your predecessor told us was coming, but now you have stacked things so unfairly against teachers because you believe you've got this window of opportunity to move in and hammer them. Rather than saying you want to directly control the wages and compensation of teachers — because basically you can do that now by virtue of how you operate the funding formula between you and the boards — you've played this game all evening and quite frankly the whole term of your government that this is all about kids. It's not. It's about money, taking money out of the system to pay for your tax cut. The more you can take off the backs of teachers, after having vilified teachers and somehow tried to make them the villains in all of this, the better, because then it won't show up as much, will it, Minister?

There won't be as many schools that close if you can take the money off the backs of the teachers. There won't be as much heating equipment that needs to be refurbished standing out for parents to see, because you've taken the

types of requirements there in that classroom. You want the teachers on your side. You want the children to have respect for those teachers.

We can measure some of the hypocrisy in which you ministry — we'll make it general — has become entangled: 66 centimetres and \$430,000 to put things out to the parents of this province that have nothing to do with improving the instruction and the learning their children get. When you funded this, when you said that instead of buying better quality textbooks, instead of putting portables where they could be used, instead of funding some of the piece of paper out for \$435,000 you did that knowing full well that it was going to be used for other things, who are looking for a sign from this government that you're serious about quality education, that you would perform the role of a referee, of somebody who would see those boards and teachers actually sit down and facilitate their discussions.

Instead, in this clause you're asking the boards to play the weight of the heavy, to play your role. You're saying they have no choice. They must fit the provisions, your provisions put in there by Bill 160, that don't allow flexibility to match the variety of students we have in this province, the different scenarios we have in terms of communities, the state of readiness of boards to be able to close schools without severely compromising students. You're going to turn the teachers of this province into political pretzels to fit your agenda.

The children of this province will pay a big price for your heavy-handedness. There is no other place for those consequences to be borne out. It's the children of this province who have to give you some pause. This political document, which you at least had the graciousness to withdraw some of earlier today, whether for political or other reasons, is still rife with politically inspired, unfair and heavy-handed material; for example, 10(1).

What you've got in terms of Mr. Lauwers in Sudbury — he was someone who was negotiating, advising the board. He's written a clause that is going to make the Sudbury separate board perhaps one of the most certain in the province to be teaching seven out of eight. You put that in there, Minister, and that's not your job. Your job is to create a learning environment. We get to advise you here to give you the opportunity to do better and then judge you if you won't. If you won't take a view of the classroom, of the classroom in the school that actually can be explained in terms of its impact on students — there's a lot of doubletalk that could be inferred from some of the things you've tried to say.

You've taken money from the system. You've put money into separate envelopes. Some of those envelopes can't be accessed by various schools. In my riding it means that immediately those schools are going to be ground because that's the decisions those boards have to make. They cannot have the cleaning staff they used to have. Similarly, when you take this inflexible point of view — we're so happy to have this respect tonight from that inflexibility, to have this actual discussion and be able

to give you some advice on some of these important matters — you're going to do the same thing to teachers. That's exactly what you seem to have in mind in terms of this particular amendment. When you say to the boards that there's no flexibility, when you say to those boards that have really bent over backwards and worked hard to keep those kids in schools: "Those agreements don't qualify as contracts. As the Minister of Education I don't see that" — Minister, there must be a level at which you can appreciate the linkage here.

If you compel those boards to puntel teachers in terms of doing things that aren't good for their communities, that aren't good for their classrooms — I spoke to a young teacher on Friday who, because you are insisting, is going to teach four 75-minute periods in a row in a portable that won't even allow her to take a washroom break, it's so far away. It's going to compromise the time she is able to put into the preparation. If that's humorous to the people opposite, to Mr. Ford or to anyone else, that's fine, but until you're willing to shoulder the responsibility — and that's really what this is about tonight. You have an opportunity to take on the responsibility that comes with writing this bill, to deal with the impact this is going to have on people's lives.

2100

If you really insist on doing that to teachers in terms of providing those work conditions that aren't good for kids — you haven't produced any study or anything that shows that this can be done without harming kids. When we called for an independent review, you didn't respond to that. Make sure that children aren't harmed here, Minister. If you don't think your government is capable of that, look no farther than your nearest hospital. We've already learned what a stubborn, uncompromising, sometimes bullying government can do when it says it's pursuing what it thinks is in our best interests. The names of those people are out there who have had tragic and adverse experiences in hospital emergency room hallways, who haven't been able to get basic medical care because of decisions that were made, because of appeals that weren't listened to, because of mistakes that your government has inflicted on this province when it cut hospitals and would not shoulder the responsibility of what happened as a result.

Minister, this is your social contract. You want to impose this on all the contracts that are affected here. This is your decision to make tonight, to provide to each of the children in this province some sense that a government, of no matter what partisan stripe, is not going to load the pressure on them, because that's the only thing the teachers can do. Teachers must teach under the conditions we create for them, and we've got to be accountable. You have no idea whether this can work in that multiplicity of boards. You have not set up any transition mechanism to make that work in ways that guarantee that children won't be harmed, just like patients were harmed in this province. You should have done that. In fact, you should still do that. If you're going to insist on doing this, you should still do that, because sooner or later the parents

tion to make this bill work and you want these draconian measures instead.

This will be your legacy, and maybe it's what you want: pulling public education apart in this province.

The Second Deputy Chair (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Pursuant to the order of the House of today's date, the time has expired. I will now put the questions.

Mrs McLeod: On a point of order, Mr Chair: I'm not in any way challenging the time agreement we all have that at the termination of this period the balance of the amendments would be considered to be read and that therefore they won't actually be read. But I do believe it may present somewhat of a procedural problem for us to follow, because with the shortness of time I don't believe there is a numbering of the amendments. Can I ask how the amendments will be placed as we come up to them?

Mr Wildman: On a point of order, Mr Chair: With regard to the amendments that have been tabled, I just point out that in regard to the NDP amendments on section 17, the arbitration section, I believe we would have to put subsection (3) and then subsection (6) prior to the amendment deleting the whole section.

Mrs McLeod: Mr Chairman, on the same point of order: The same thing would apply. There would be some confusion in knowing what we're actually voting on unless you are able to read the amendment so we know what we're voting on.

The Second Deputy Chair: We'll read them all.

Mr Wildman: And the order I suggested, is that acceptable?

The Second Deputy Chair: Mr Wildman has moved an amendment to subsection 10(5).

Intervention.

The Second Deputy Chair: — that subsection 10(5) of the act be deleted. Carried? No.

Mrs McLeod: On a point of order again, Mr Chair: Do we revert back to ones which were stacked from earlier in the debate?

The Second Deputy Chair: All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."
In my opinion, the nays have it. The vote is therefore deferred.

Mrs McLeod has moved that subsections 10(5), (6) and (7) of the bill be struck out. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."
All those opposed, say "nay."
In my opinion, the nays have it. The vote is deferred.

Mr Wildman has moved an amendment to section 12(b), that the words "Minister of Labour" be deleted and replaced with "chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board." Is the pleasure of the committee that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."
All those opposed, say "nay."
In my opinion, the nays have it. The vote is therefore deferred.

All those in favour, say "aye."
All those opposed, say "nay."
In my opinion, the nays have it. The vote is therefore deferred.

of those children are going to come looking for who is responsible. They're going to know that it was you who could have protected those kids from being harmed. Instead, you've decided to sustain this myopic view that says, "As long as we're taking a billion dollars out of education, as long as we're feeding the tax cut, that's more important."

This is the point in your mandate where, as our leader said today, we're looking for you to be reasonable. If there's another side to the personality of the Harris government, if there's a Dr Jekyll out there, we want to see him. We've seen Mr Hyde. We want to see whether you can respond to the normative requirement that parents across this province have, and that's to protect their kids even as you make changes.

You've made a lot of wild promises here tonight about how this is going to make things better and your propaganda repeats them and repeats them, but there's a fundamental inconsistency to that. You're not taking responsibility for implementing these. You stripped the contracts of the affected workers here, the teachers. You did that. That was your decision; it was not a natural outcropping of what boards and teachers had decided as a result of their bargaining elsewhere. Then you made them go through an exercise, your experiment of sticking them in rooms all around the province, with varying capacities to respond.

Tons of them have only put together those one-year agreements. They haven't been able to make it work in terms of Bill 160. Because you won't take the responsibility of persuading, of learning what to do, of working with those boards, of working with those unions the way our leader did when he sat down and talked to the boards and the unions last week to try and find solutions — the very seat you should have been sitting in. That's what the children of this province and their parents would expect from you: to protect them at all costs. You're entitled to have your way with the education system if you can ensure that you're going to defend the interests of children as you do it.

You're in no position to do that, because in almost every instance what we've got here tonight is what the Minister of Education has wrought on the system and now is trying to cover up. Every time this bill addresses the rights of teachers and so on, it comes right up against the provisions of Bill 160. You're like someone coming along after a car crash once you've thrown the sacks on the road. This is your accident. This is probably the only clear opportunity you're going to have to do something about it before the impacts are visited upon children across the province.

In my riding we've got elementary children whose teachers are there, who haven't been locked out, who have to travel miles and miles to other schools. Four complete classes are being bused away because of you, Minister. They're losing their instructional time, they're not able to have a recess in the afternoon and they don't get to participate in extracurricular activities because you've taken them away from them. You didn't see fit to have a transi-

The motion is carried.

Mr Wildman moves that subsection 17(3) be deleted. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the motion carry?

In my opinion, the nays have it. Mr. Johnson moves that the lo-

All those in favour, say "aye."
All those opposed, say "nay."
In my opinion, the nays have it. The vote is deferred.

Mr Johnson moves that the long title of the bill be amended by striking out "and to amend the Education Act with respect to instructional time."

We will now vote on these amendments. Call in the members; this will be a five-minute bell.

The committee recessed from 2121 to 2126.

The Second Deputy Chair: We're now voting on Liberal amendment 10(1).

All those in favour of the amendment will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): The ayes are 34; the nays are 57.

We'll now deal with NDP amendment 10(5). All those in favour will please rise and remain standing. Same vote?

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 34; the nays are 57.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion lost.

We'll now deal with Liberal amendments 10(5), (6) and (7). All those in favour will please rise. Same vote?

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 34; the nays are 57.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion lost.

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 57; the nays are 34.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion carried.

We now deal with section 11. All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 57; the nays are 34.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion carried.

We'll now deal with NDP amendment 12(1)(b). All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 34; the nays are 57.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion lost.

We'll now deal with Liberal amendment 12(1) and (2).

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 34; the nays are 57.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion lost.

We'll now deal with section 12.

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 57; the nays are 34.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion carried.

We will now deal with section 13.

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 57; the nays are 34.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion carried.

We will now deal with Liberal amendment 14(6).

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 34; the nays are 57.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion lost.

We will now deal with sections 15 and 16.

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 57; the nays are 34.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion lost.

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 57; the nays are 34.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion carried.

We will now deal with NDP amendment 17(3).

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 34; the nays are 57.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion lost.

Mrs McLeod: On a point of order, Mr Chairman: Did the government not place the motion to amend subsection 17(2)?

The Second Deputy Chair: Yes, and it was carried.

We will now deal with Liberal amendment 17(4).

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 34; the nays are 57.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion lost.

We will now deal with NDP amendment 17(6).

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 34; the nays are 57.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion lost.

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 34; the nays are 57.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the motion carried.

We'll now deal with NDP amendment 18(3).

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Christopherson, David
Cleary, John C.
Collie, Mike
Crozier, Bruce
Cullen, Alex

Lalonde, Jean-Marie
Larkin, Frances
Lessard, Wayne
Marlet, Shelley
Wood, Len

Sergio, Mario
Slipo, Tony
William, Bud

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 58; the nays are 34.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House of today's date, the bill is ordered for third reading, to commence immediately.

Hon Mr Sterling: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I believe we have an agreement that the time, which is 60 minutes, will be split 10 minutes on the government side, 20 minutes for each of the opposition parties, and then 10 minutes on the government side at the end.

The Acting Speaker: Agreed.

Hon David Johnson: I'm proposing that the time for the government side be split by the members for Durham West and Durham East, and the member for Middlesex today, I'll simply express my extreme delight that the kids are going to be back in class tomorrow.

The Acting Speaker: Minister, you have to move third reading first.

BACK TO SCHOOL ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 SUR LE RETOUR À L'ÉCOLE

Mr Johnson moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill 62, An Act to resolve labour disputes between teachers' unions and school boards / Projet de loi 62, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail opposant des syndicats d'enseignants et des conseils scolaires.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Minis-
ter?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): Again, Mr Speaker, my extreme delight that the kids will be back in school.

I split my time with the members for Durham West, Durham East and Middlesex.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): I'm very pleased today to rise in support of this legislation and to say how very pleased I am on behalf of the parents in the riding of Durham West that their children will actually be back in school tomorrow, which is where they very much want to be and certainly I've been having over the last couple of days, parents and students have simply been fed up with the teachers' unions playing politics in the schools. I'm very pleased that they will be back.

I think the hypocrisy in the position that has been taken in my riding by some of the members of the union leadership has been, quite frankly, breathtaking. Last fall, when the teachers were undertaking their labour action, they claimed that there wasn't enough money in the system. They said there wasn't enough money for textbooks, for

new schools, for smaller classes, more teachers, that somehow or other all that money had been taken out of the system.

Now, this fall, when their benefits are on the table, the pamphlet that has gone out to parents in my riding is claiming that the boards have millions of more dollars to pay for their demands. I think the parents, in the calls that I've had, have seen through this very clearly. What is important in our region is that the new funding formula, the requirement in the legislation last fall, is working. In our Durham board we have more textbooks, we have more teachers, we have an education system that is working better in our region because of the reforms that this government has put into place, which I very much support.

I think I may use the quote about all the more money that's in the system in my campaign brochure, wherever that may come, because I think that certainly reinforces what we said was going to happen, that there would be more money available for the teachers and the children in the classrooms. We said we would do it, the minister said this would happen, and that is indeed what is happening in the classrooms in my community.

I certainly respect the collective bargaining process, but not when it is used to play political games with our children. That clearly is what has been happening, where some individuals have been trying to fight last fall's battle all over again, fight Bill 160, a bill that guaranteed equal funding for students, that would cap average class sizes, that would ask teachers to spend 25 more minutes in the classroom, things that will help guarantee the quality and improve the quality in our education system.

It is clearly time — we thought about this, and it was not an easy decision for the Minister of Education, but we could not in good conscience allow this kind of political posturing to occur to threaten the education of our children. It is now time to stop. That's what this legislation will do.

I think it is also time, with all due respect, that we declare Durham region an Earl Manners and Marshall Jarvis-free zone. I think our teachers are quite capable of solving their issues and dealing with the board. It has been quite distressing to see many teachers who feel they've been taken advantage of with what has happened over there. I must say as well that when we sat here this afternoon, when the government was trying to put forward legislation, trying to be reasonable and flexible about getting this passed so children could get back into the schools, it was interesting to see that the members of the honourable opposition across the way had to run over to see Mr Jarvis and Mr Manners and consult before they took a position in the House. This is something we haven't seen.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): Pay homage.

Hon Mrs Ecker: My colleague from Markham says, "Pay homage." That certainly was the way it could look to

us. That's something we're quite surprised to see with the Liberal Party.

I'm very pleased that this legislation will be passing back into the schools so that the teachers who care about those kids are going to be able to teach, so that those kids can learn and so those parents can be satisfied and know their children are going to get a better education.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): It's a real pleas-

ure to join in support of the minister and also to speak after my peer from Durham West, the Honourable Janet Ecker. I know just how hard she works in Durham and how important the issue is to all of us in Durham. I know exactly what she means. The time for politics is over. Respectfully, I think Mr Hampton moved a long way forward to allow this to go through this House today, to allow our students to go back to school. That's what we all want.

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): The real

leader of the opposition.

Mr O'Toole: The real leader of the opposition came out today, and I think to the chagrin of Mr McGuinty — who's here, by the way. I shouldn't name him, but respectfully, he hasn't been here for the rest of the day.

Anyway, I'm going to name the boards that are affected by this decision. I think it's important:

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board; Durham School Board; Durham District School Board; Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board; Peterborough-Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board; my board — I was a trustee there and my wife teaches for that board; Sudbury Catholic District School Board; Toronto Catholic District School Board; and York Catholic District School Board: mostly Catholic boards. I'm surprised. They are getting more money. They've been fighting for years for full funding; now they have it. What's up?

I think the problems between Earl and Marshall, who is actually running it — if you read what Marshall is saying and what Earl is saying, technically, Marshall is really following Earl Manners's lead, in my book.

2220

I've had at least 20 calls per day, if not more, from my riding. I try to return those calls. Many of them are students. I've got one — this is a quote from one of the student trustees in our area. I'd ask every member here tonight to listen to this, from one of our students. He wrote this, and it's a press release. I'm going to read part of it.

"The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board recognizes the student senate as the representative of the 13,874 students in its jurisdiction. The student senate is composed of two representatives from each secondary school in this district. Our representative to the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board is Chad Walsh, student trustee." By the way, Mr Walsh signed this memo.

"The members of the student senate regret the impasse that has arisen between the board and the teachers. This labour dispute is unfortunate for all concerned and contin-

ues to create many problems. One major problem is the adverse effect this dispute is having on student morale. The feeling of uncertainty and the loss of extracurricular activities have striped many students of their optimism. They are losing sight of their goals.

"Our community suffers...."

It goes on to say, "The members of the student senate believe it would be in the best interests," of the two parties if this dispute were to be solved hastily with a resolution. "Our students and our community cannot reasonably be expected to endure continued disruptions of this nature."

This is written by Chad Walsh, a student from that board. Each one of us should listen to the young people. That's what this is about. It's about the students. There's politics on both sides, including ours. Listen to the students and open up your mind.

Interjections.

Mr O'Toole: I'm listening when you're speaking. I know the members on the other side have quite honestly exacerbated this problem.

How does it affect us personally? As a parent with five children, and my wife is a teacher — she was told this week by the union personnel in her school in Bowmanville, "If you don't obey these work-to-rule orders, you'll be fired." Can you imagine? That was said — you can quote me on that — by the union representative: "You will be fired." My wife takes care of primary children. The bus was there. It was a new school; it was a construction site. The reality is, this problem is —

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I want at the outset to take the opportunity to congratulate my colleague Lyn McLeod, the member for Fort William, for the outstanding work she has done on this matter. While a number of parents, students, and in fact a lot of teachers might be happy tonight that our schools will be open tomorrow, it's important to recognize that today and tonight is not a victory; it's an admission of failure. It's a failure on the part of this government to provide stability in public education in Ontario.

You've got to ask yourself, what kind of policies would have led to this unprecedented disruption, chaos and confusion? You've got to ask yourself, what kind of policies would have led to this kind of strife, divisiveness, chaos and history of the plane? What kind of educational policies — an event, as I understand it, unprecedented in the classes, over a million school children being out of school led to every single teacher in the province vacating their number of weeks now, and that prior to the summer break children being out of school today who have been out for a fusion in Ontario schools, the kind that led to 200,000 have led to this unprecedented disruption, chaos and confusion?

Let's be perfectly clear about this. Nobody here, surely, is prepared to say there is no room for improvement in the public education system in Ontario. The issue then surely is, how do we go about bringing that kind of change? Are we going to recognize at some point in time that the best kind of education, the ideal that we hold out here, the one that informs our thinking and inspires our efforts, the very best kind of education, is one that necessarily involves a

good working partnership between government, trustees,

teachers and parents?

For those who take some consolation in the passage of

this bill later on tonight, they should understand that in

reality there are 144 collective agreements to be negoti-

ated. That's the total. Eleven have been arrived at. There

are 144 agreements now on the books. The balance of the

144 could still be the subject of a strike or a lockout. So

this is but the tip of the iceberg in terms of what it's about

to address here. Eight school boards, that's all. There are

many, many which still have agreements that have yet to

be reached, which still could be the subject of a strike or a

lockout.

When you talk about a failure to provide stability in

public education, what we're fundamentally talking about

here is a failure on the part of the government, a failure on

the part of Mike Harris's leadership to bring sides

together. That's the job of the Premier. That's what a

Premier is supposed to do. Not this guy. He prefers to

divide. He prefers to drive sides apart and that's exactly

what he's done over the past two years. Whether it's

through his negative TV ads attacking teachers, Mike

Harris drives sides apart. Whether it's through his inter-

ference in the bargaining process, Mike Harris drives

sides apart. Whether it's through his decision to bring

forward a 17-page omnibus bill today rather than straight-

forward, simple, honest back-to-work legislation, Mike

Harris drives sides apart. Again, that's not what Ontarians

want from their Premier. They want a Premier who brings

sides together.

If you stop and think about it for a minute, we can't

afford in this new economy, in this competitive global

economy, to have at the helm some guy who has special

expertise and who is overly adept at dividing our popula-

tion, at pitting one group against the other. If I were living

in another jurisdiction today, in some other part of the

world and I heard of this news coming out of Ontario, I

would be saying, "Thank goodness there's somebody over

there who is giving us a hand." We've got a Premier who

is dividing the people.

What are our shared objectives today in Ontario? What

are our common goals? What have we bought into?

What's our common sense of purpose in Ontario today? I

think if you were to go out there and talk to people at the

doorstep, go into the laundromats or the doughnut shops or

the church basements and ask people what they think

Mike Harris is making us all buy into, where he is taking

us, what is our common sense of purpose, whether you're

talking about education or health care or anything else,

they'd say: "I'm not aware of any. All I know about this

guy is he's really good at causing strife and disturbance

and chaos and confusion." We can't afford that, not on the

cusp of the 21st century.

You know what I did? Last week I got hold of those

people who represent teachers in Ontario and I asked them

to come and meet with me. Then I got hold of those people

who represent school boards in Ontario and I asked them

if they too might come and visit with me in my office. I sat

them down and I said, "Listen, what is it that I might do to

2230

I met with the representatives of the teachers and the

representatives of the school boards and it quickly became

apparent that there were a few common threads of concern

that they expressed. I took their advice and last Friday

I put forward what I call a school stability plan. It seems to

me that if we're going to recognize rights from time to

time in Ontario, surely one of the rights we ought to rec-

ognize when it comes to Ontario parents is the right to

have stability in the lives of their children when it comes

to their schooling. So I put forward a plan, the school

stability plan, and in it I asked the government to do three

simple things:

Number one, would you please provide an independent

review of the funding formula? It's readily apparent to

anybody who has spent any time looking at this that the

funding formula is totally inadequate in terms of ensuring

that we continue to offer quality public education in

Ontario.

The next thing I said is, would you not permit us to

have one-year contracts and allow those to be signed until

the funding review is completed?

Third, would you not permit a phase-in of the class size

provisions where school boards simply don't have the

physical space to meet the imposed requirements?

It seems to me those are all eminently reasonable. What

I'm trying to do here is to inject at least some element of

stability in public education in Ontario. I have received no

word from the government with respect to that offer.

I did something else on Friday, something I spoke about

earlier today in question period. I told the government that

we were prepared to be reasonable, to work with them to

solve the crisis they themselves had created. I told the

government last Friday that if they presented a fair and

honest bill, we would not delay the final vote on that bill.

I want to be very clear: We don't support this legislative mission, a body that was first established by Conservatives some time ago in this province. If it comes to making a decision, if it comes to listening to the ERC as to whether or not teachers should be sent back to the classroom, or to Mike Harris as to whether or not they should be sent back to the classroom, who do you think we're going to trust to be objective, impartial, at arm's length? Surely it's not Mike Harris.

Had the former listened to our reasonable proposal, those 200,000 kids could have been back in the classroom this morning. Mike Harris refused to listen to that proposal and of course that's perfectly in keeping with his track record to date.

It's important to understand how we got here in the first place, to the point where more and more people are losing confidence in public education in Ontario. If I were a cynical person, I would say that this was very much in keeping with the strategy and the intent of the Premier, which is to make people believe they should lose confidence in public education so he could create an opening for things like charter schools, for things like a voucher system.

I can tell you that as far as I'm concerned, the very foundation of our future economic prosperity in this province lies in a healthy, adequately funded, properly supported, nurtured, cherished, valued public education system.

What are our kids going to be returning to? In a world, a mess, This legislation will not resolve the crisis in public education in Ontario. This crisis is going to continue, this mess is going to continue until Mike Harris ends his attack on the teaching profession and begins returning some of the money he has taken out of the classroom. Students are going to be returning to classrooms that have less funding. Students will be returning to fewer teachers and those teachers who are there will have less time to devote to individual students.

During the course of my travels throughout this province, I can tell you not once did I ever happen upon a parent who said to me, "The problem with public education today in Ontario is that my son's teacher has too much time to spend with him." They never said that, and that's what we're talking about here. The government can't cloak it in all kinds of edubabble. At the end of the day, what they want to impose on public education in Ontario

is for teachers to have less time with individual students and that cannot be a healthy thing in Ontario education. Can we afford all of this chaos, this confusion, this demoralized teaching profession that this government would convert into a group of clock punchers, where they have to account for every single minute? Any time that is not devoted to what they call instructional time apparently has no value. Either our teachers are professionals or they're not. If they are professionals, as I believe them to be, then at some point in time we have to place some confidence in them, some confidence in their ability to deliver. We can help by assigning some overriding objectives, but I don't want to get into this business where we tell them they have to account for each and every minute, because you don't have to go too far down that path and suddenly we decide we're going to have to hire people now to coach the football team like they do in the United States of America, and we're going to have to hire people to coach volleyball because teachers are just clock punchers. They never got into the business, never got into the profession of teaching, never entered that vocation to be considered clock punchers by the government.

Let me tell you about my commitment to improve education in Ontario, some of the things I've already committed to. Number one, we will repeal Bill 160. Number two, we will create a real working partnership in education. I understand, recognize and respect the limitations of government when it comes to delivering quality education. We simply can't do it without the help of teachers, without the help of trustees, without the help of parents. You've got a choice, to enlist them in your cause or suffer the consequences.

Maybe to speak the language this government understands, if you had a corporation, ask yourself, if you wanted to get the best out of your corporation, how would you treat your employees? How would you get them motivated? How would you make them ambitious? How would you get them to feel good about their job? Would it be by taking the approach this government has taken towards teachers, by constantly criticizing, denigrating, demoralizing, devaluing? The answer's obvious. You wouldn't do it in business and they should know as well that you don't do it in education.

2240

We've got to create a partnership with our trustees. My father sat as a trustee for 16 years at the Ottawa Board of Education. I can recall in the evenings at home he would get calls. Somebody would phone and say, "We've got a problem at a school." First, my father knew where the school was and, second, there was an excellent chance he had some understanding of the personality or the culture at that school. He knew who the principal was and in many cases he knew who the teachers were.

He took his responsibility seriously and you didn't take on that job, contrary to the myth perpetuated by this government, to get rich. He took on the job because he felt it was an important responsibility, and that's a feeling shared by trustees throughout this province. Either we're going to have to place some confidence in them to do their

job and to represent the interests of local ratepayers, or would you just tell them we don't need them any more? I think the government ought to be honest on that front. I return some real authority to them and that has to include some local ability to raise taxes.

Obviously, from what I've been seeing tonight, an important part of this partnership has got to be with teachers. The single most important resource we have when it comes to education in Ontario is not the books, it's not the curriculum, it's not the physical space, it's not the class size. The greatest resource we have in education today in Ontario is our teachers. Never before has any government set out so deliberately, it would seem to me, to democratize a group of citizens as Mike Harris has done with our teachers.

To be brief and to summarize: If we're going to have quality education in Ontario, if we're going to assure its continuing existence as a thriving, cherished and valued experience for our students, we can only do it by means of a partnership.

Mrs Frances Rankin (Beaches-Woodbine): As we are about 30 minutes away from the final vote on this piece of legislation before us today, I think we have to ask ourselves, each of us from all parties in this Legislature: Are kids going to be better off? Are classrooms going to be better off? Are we going to be providing better-quality education after we pass this legislation today? I am sad to say that the answer to that is unequivocal and it's no.

The former Minister of Education committed the government to something in the very early days of the Harris government. He committed their government to creating a crisis in the education system in the province of Ontario: a very cynical, a very calculated plan, something in the lingo of change management out there in the business world that the minister imported into public services. But do you know what he forgot and what they forgot and what Mike Harris forgot? When you create a crisis in the education system to create the room to make the changes you want, who is affected at the other end of it are some real people. First and foremost, there are the kids, the kids whom government is supposed to be dedicated to protect, dedicated to provide the best quality of public education that is possible. That should be your goal, your mission. And the people who work in the system, the teachers, the education assistants, the caretakers, the administrative staff, are affected by your crisis too: parents, families, communities.

I've got to say that this is one promise that you've kept and you've kept it in spades. There is a crisis in the education system in Ontario right now. There is chaos. I'm not just talking about the board that are affected by the legislation that the government will pass here tonight. I'm not just talking about the boards where the staff are locked out or where there are strikes going on, because, actually, there are hundreds of others where the negotiations are up in the air, where the dispute is ongoing, where extracurricular activities are not taking place, where this dispute can still

evolve and where we can see more lockouts and more strikes in the future.

Does your bill do anything to help settle the disputes across the province? Again I say, unfortunately, I'm sad to say this, but no. In fact it creates more barriers to settlement. But I suspect in a way that has been the goal of the government all along. Take a look at it. It started with Bill 104, when you took away flexibility from local boards. For a government that certainly believes in people out there and in small government, not in big government, they've amassed more power into the centre than any government in Ontario in the history of Ontario.

If you think about it, boards, where they understand the local issues, surely that's where the local solution should be found between local teachers, parents and boards together. But you're not allowing that to happen. You are imposing the cookie-cutter approach out of Toronto. You know, harm-fisted, whatever we say in Toronto in the ivory tower, that goes for the whole province. I can't believe that's your approach but in effect that's what you've done. You followed Bill 104 with Bill 160, where you changed the rules on everybody, where things that had been subject to local decision-making between boards and teachers and parents' councils you took away from them and you set the rules in legislation. You again centralized power. You followed that with a funding formula that's part of your overall plan to take \$1 billion out of the education system, \$1 billion out of our classrooms.

I don't believe for a moment the rhetoric I continue to hear from your government because we see every day, when we go out to schools, the effect in the classroom, we see the supplies they're doing without, we see that there are more kids. In some of the classrooms out there there are larger class sizes now as a result of the move you've made and making it board-wide averages. There are larger class sizes than there were. You can't square the circle. It's not possible.

All through this, I can't help but believe we're at a point where you wanted to be, at a point where you wanted to see the public confidence in our public education system eroded and where you wanted to see this kind of conflict. Just look at the actions of the last little while. You not only changed the rules of bargaining in 160 but you essentially ripped up all of the contracts in the province as of August 31, just a handful of days before the kids were due back in school.

If you wanted stability, if you wanted good transition, why would you force all the contracts to end right before school comes back? They all had different expiry dates. Some were two-year agreements, some were one. Again, board by board these things would have been worked out with transition but, no, August 31, they're all gone, all the terms of the collective agreements are gone. Boards can impose new terms. Surely you knew that would lead to strikes and that would lead to conflict.

Then you followed that with a series of the most amazing flip-flops by the minister and the Premier, where they said: "We're not going to legislate back to work. It's between the boards and the teachers. They'll figure it

teachers the enemy out there, by labelling them as a public interest group.

They have an interest and it can even be a special interest, if that's what you want to call it. Their special interest is in the education of the children of this province, it's in the professionalism in which they carry that out. It's time you recognized it, it's time we stopped hearing the Premier run down teachers, run down our education system. It's time we had a government that took a breath and said, "We support our education system, we support quality education and we're going to work together with the partners to get that."

As I'm sharing time with others in my caucus, I want to just finish by saying that this legislation, which I began with, does not fix the problems in the education system. There are four things that are needed to fix the problems and ensure that we have the quality system we need. We must repeal Bill 160, we must reinvest funding resources into our classrooms, we must restore flexibility to local boards to find local solutions and we must ensure that our teachers can spend quality time, necessary time, not just in the classroom but one on one with students, to ensure that our students have the benefit of the full experience of a quality education system. If you do that, we can support you. If you do that, we can ensure that our kids not only get back to the classroom but get back to a quality education in the classroom.

M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) : Je veux prendre l'opportunité de faire un couple de commentaires sur la situation que nous, le gouvernement provincial, avons créée. Ça, c'est le mot important. La situation dans laquelle on se trouve aujourd'hui faisant affaître avec les négociations entre les enseignants et les conseils scolaires n'est pas une situation que les conseils ou les éducateurs, eux, ont créée. C'est une situation que le gouvernement a créée. Il faut être très, très clair.

Il faut être très clair. Pourquoi? Numéro un, le gouvernement a décidé de tout réformer du système scolaire sous la Loi 104. Ils ont repris des commissions scolaires et ils y ont mis des unités beaucoup plus grandes. Ils ont donné un milliard de dollars de moins qu'en 1995. Ils ont changé la Loi sur l'éducation sous la Loi 160 puis ils disent, «Allez vous arranger, vous autres, les enseignants et les conseils scolaires, pour faire votre job comme enseignants et commissions scolaires», et on trouve que c'est quasiment impossible. Pourquoi? Parce que le gouvernement a fait une décision, une décision politique. La décision, c'est qu'ils veulent changer le système d'éducation contre un modèle qui reflète plus étroitement les pensées du gouvernement que dans le passé.

Ce qu'on voit est un système diminué, un système qui est moins qu'il ne l'était en 1995 et, je veux le dire ce soir, un système qui va avoir dans les années à venir, pas trop longtemps, des écoles de chartre dans la province, un système d'éducation privée pour ceux qui ont de l'argent, un système d'éducation publique pour ceux qui en ont moins. C'est là qu'on s'en va. C'est la décision du gouvernement provincial.

"And then the next day: "We're going to legislate back to work. We may have to because we're worried about this." Then the next day, "No, we're not going to legislate back until the ERC rules jeopardy." And then you announce, "We are going to legislate back."

What do you think that did to bargaining? Every time you threatened legislation, more boards stepped back and didn't believe it when we told you that a week ago or two weeks ago, surely today you must with your own eyes have seen the evidence last night when the Toronto Catholic board said no. There was agreement there where they could have got the teachers back to the classroom, the kids back in the classroom today, and they said, "No, we're simply going to sit back and wait now to make sure we're covered by the legislation."

In the middle of negotiations the minister sends out a massive, because the people in the ministry have called around and found out some of the settlements, giving a definition to instructional time that undermines some of the agreements that were already made, and he says, "No, this is the rule: more negotiations stop immediately." Then he's told, "Whoa." He now may be called as a party to the negotiations, and having bargained in bad faith, he steps back the next day and says, "Oh well, if you can negotiate something before I bring this into legislation, go ahead." Every step of the way you have confused the issues, you have made it more difficult to get resolution, you have forced this crisis and you've forced us to a situation now where you've got legislation ordering people back into the classroom. You know we all want the kids back in the classroom and teachers want to be back in the classroom.

But take a look at what you've included in the legislation. Take a look at the repugnant provisions you've put in with respect to arbitration, with respect to forced ability to pay, language beyond what anyone has seen before. Any decent arbitrator with any respect for the profession of arbitration in labour relations, in interest arbitration, won't be able to abide this. But of course you don't worry about that, because we've already seen in the other sectors — the nursing home sector, for example — where you simply go out and you appoint retired judges who have no background or history in interest arbitration or in labour relations, who don't understand any of the precedents. But you don't care, because it's your end goal to undermine the confidence in the system, to allow us to get to a point where there will be a public demand to consider charter schools, to consider vouchers. It's quite clear that's where you're headed.

Take a look at the provisions in this which strip contractors at this point in time without it even going to an independent arbitrator. You're allowing them to strip provisions in collective agreements, the collective agreements that you tore up under Bill 160, and all the time you set the grounds for this by vilifying teachers, by making

2300

It is certainly incredible in the annals of this province, in the history of this province, that a government would pass legislation which literally terminates every teaching contract in the province the very day before students are supposed to return to the classroom. The very day before students are to return to the classroom, this government in effect wipes out all of the teaching contracts.

It is incredible in the history of a province that while boards and teachers try to overcome this incredible obstacle put in their way by the government, this government then over the course of the next two to three weeks does all it can, everything it can to frustrate the coming together of those discussions, to frustrate the development of new collective agreements, to delay where it can and in many cases to destroy.

It is incredible that in this province you get a director of education, in this case Mr Don Foltz, who is the education director for the district separate school board in Peterborough, writing a letter to the Minister of Education and saying in that letter, "But for your interference, Minister, we would have had a collective agreement with the Peterborough district separate school board." That is what has happened. That is what this government has done. This government has literally driven the education system of this province to this point, driven the system to this kind of chaos, this kind of crisis.

What will come of this legislation? The children who have been locked out of their schools or the children who have been affected by some strikes will over the course of the next couple of days be able to go back into their classrooms. But is this legislation going to solve the crisis? No, it is not going to solve the crisis. It is not going to overcome the fact that \$1 billion has been taken out of the system. It is not going to overcome the fact that this government has set out on a course to attack and vilify and demoralize teachers. It is not going to overcome the under-

resourcing that we now see in our schools. It is not going to overcome any of those things. I don't like to say this to parents, I don't like to say this to students, but over the weeks and months ahead we are going to see a continuation of the awful atmosphere, the terrible atmosphere this government has created in our schools and in our education system as a whole.

This is not a happy night. Yes, students will over the next couple of days go back into the classrooms but they will not go back into happy classrooms; they will not go into adequately funded classrooms; they will not go into schools where the teaching morale is as it has been and as it should be. That is too bad. That is very sad because we've had one of the better education systems in the world. Unfortunately, this government isn't —

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex): I'm certainly pleased to have the opportunity to conclude this evening's debate on third reading of this bill and lend my support to what I think is a very significant decision the Legislature has made today and a decision we've made, those supporting

Je veux aussi faire un commentaire que je me suis fait dire l'autre jour. J'étais avec Blain Morin, notre candidat dans le comté de Nickel Belt. On avait la chance d'être dans le bout de Chelmsford, au «post office», je crois. Quelqu'un est arrivé qui me connaissait par vue, parce que je suis assez dans ces médias dans le coin, et il est certain qu'il connaissait M. Blain Morin comme étant notre candidat. Cette personne est arrivée et s'est identifiée en me disant, «Monsieur Morin et monsieur Bisson, je veux vous dire que je suis un enseignant.» Il est enseignant depuis des années. Il a dit, «J'aurais, dans mes plus qu'aujourd'hui.» Pourquoi? Parce que, dans son opinion, comme dans l'opinion de beaucoup d'autres enseignants dans la province, ce gouvernement ne met pas de valeur sur l'oeuvre qu'ils font dans une classe avec nos jeunes. Cela m'a beaucoup bouleversé, comme ça a bouleversé M. Morin. Lui il m'a dit, «Écoute, Gilles, si un professeur va à l'école et qu'il ne se sent pas bien, il ne sent pas que son oeuvre ait de la valeur, il ne se sent pas reconnu par son gouvernement et son employeur, comment cet enseignant-là va-t-il être capable de faire une bonne job avec nos jeunes?»

Moi, je sais qu'ils sont des professionnels, mais ces enseignants trouvent que ce gouvernement ne valorise pas leurs efforts. Je veux dire de la part du caucus NPD, parce que je pense qu'il faut le dire, que nous, on respecte le travail que font les enseignants et les enseignantes de l'Ontario avec nos jeunes. Nous autres, on dit que c'est une oeuvre de valeur, quelque chose d'important pas seulement pour eux comme enseignants, comme une job; c'est beaucoup plus que ça. Ce sont eux autres qui ont travaillé dans nos jeunes dans leurs mains. Ce sont eux qui — Julie Bisson, Nathalie Bisson — et les autres jeunes travers la province ont la chance d'avoir une éducation qui peut leur donner les avantages dont ils ont besoin dans les années à venir.

I just want to be clear. In closing I only want to say that it needs to be put on the record that the work that teachers of this province do is work that is of value, it is something that I respect and other New Democrats respect and, in the words of Blain Morin, "If this government is not prepared to respect and to give value to the work that teachers do in this province, then this government should not be the government of Ontario." They should stand down, call a provincial election and let somebody like the New Democrats move in, who recognize and respect the work of the people of this province, work done by the teachers in Ontario.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): In the time remaining I want to make some remarks about what got us here tonight and why this frankly is not a very happy

occasion.

It is incredible, certainly in the annals of Ontario history, that a Minister of Education would ever blurt out the words, "We need to create a crisis in education," but that in fact has been the starting point for this government's total direction with respect to education.

the bill, in support of students who have been affected by

the labour dispute.

It's about making the right decisions, in my mind, for the students of this province, and that's why right from the outset the government of Ontario has set a course of developing a very comprehensive plan for education reform, one whereby we recognize the need for changes in the way school boards were governed and the structures that oversaw that process, changes in the way education was financed in this province, which historically report after report had identified as being in need of a remedy, and last, as I think we've heard today from many members in the Legislature, the need to change the curriculum standards in this province so that they meet the needs of students in our classroom.

We've heard some positive comments from members on all sides of the House in terms of the success the curriculum documents have realized in this province, and certainly the benefit they're bringing to our elementary students at this point in time.

It's in this context that we've developed a comprehensive plan that focuses directly on the students in our classroom, directly on the resources that teachers need to deliver a high-quality product to the young people of this province. It's about investing more into the classrooms in this province, the sum of some \$583 million, a very significant contribution and statement of support in terms of the importance that education holds for all of us, holds for students and certainly holds for parents. In doing so, we've recognized that we are going through a difficult period of time, that there is a difficult process and transition period we have to move through, an environment that requires a stable funding environment. That's why at the outset the Minister of Education very clearly understood that process was going to be a significant one that required this commitment to provide a stable playing field for our changes to be realized.

Certainly a significant part of this is developing a stronger parental say, and clearly the desire for parents to be involved was re-emphasized over the course of the last two weeks where we saw parents coming forward to see the minister, to meet with the minister to express their concerns, their desires and certainly their vision for education in this province, and the willingness of the minister to hear their concerns and act on their concerns. Quite frankly, the message they provided to him was that the time had come for action, that the time had come for action to bring closure to this issue so that the kids of this province, those who were being affected by a work stoppage, could return to their classrooms and start their school year, where they should have been at the first part of September.

We've said from the outset — as we've experienced, quite frankly, in the community college sector where teachers in that particular area worked without a contract for some two years and those individuals continue to provide services in the classrooms — and very clearly the message has been, "Let the teachers teach, let the negotiators negotiate and let the kids learn in the classroom where they should be."

The leader of the official opposition said the bill was not good public policy. I disagree. The back-to-work legislation we're debating today is appropriate and necessary in terms of the educational experiences of the students affected by this disruption. I personally believe the Minister of Education continues to provide leadership, to provide a vision of where we have to take education into

I heard the leader of the official opposition ask the question in his remarks whether or not this will bring long-lasting improvements to the education system in this province. Unlike him and his colleagues in the New Democratic caucus who support the repeal of Bill 160, I do not support a return to the status quo. In my mind, repealing Bill 160, returning and providing taxation powers to school boards and trustees in this province, is an indication that you support the way things were in education in this province. Quite frankly, the reports we've had for two decades have suggested the contrary, that now is the time for, the need for change.

I had thought when I first came here in 1995 that I had a sense that the NDP realized there was a need for education change, that there was a sense of leadership emerging, but they failed to move ahead and at the same time. That change is necessary started with Dave Cooke and Mr. Stille, who also I think had a vision of change for education in this province, but it didn't materialize. In 1995, under the leadership of Mike Harris, and now two education ministers, that new vision is materializing and is one that I think will serve the students and the parents of this province in a very positive way. The education system itself has caused drag. It's dragged our teachers down and it's dragged our students down. The focus of our reforms is to reverse that, whereby teachers can excel and students can excel in the same context.

room where they need to be in front of their teachers." The community college example was one where the services weren't withdrawn, where that was the desire of those individuals to continue to provide the services to the students at the community college level. There is no reason why the same scenario could not have materialized at the elementary and secondary levels.

As I said at the outset, change is not easy. As an individual who has been through a process at the municipal level, a process that I experienced personally, that was decided upon by the previous NDP government, I understand the challenges that come with amalgamations and I understand the frustrations people experience as employees as you move from one employer to a new employer. It's not an easy process. I can say from a personal perspective, having experienced that situation, that I am fully aware of the feelings, the apprehension and the hope in some cases that those changes bring, that the changes you may experience may lead to a more positive experience in the future. I do recognize that change is difficult, but when it comes to education in this province, the changes are very necessary. The transition period we are going through is very significant and one that requires very careful management, focused entirely on bringing improvements to the education system.

I heard the leader of the official opposition ask the question in his remarks whether or not this will bring long-lasting improvements to the education system in this province. Unlike him and his colleagues in the New Democratic caucus who support the repeal of Bill 160, I do not support a return to the status quo. In my mind, repealing Bill 160, returning and providing taxation powers to school boards and trustees in this province, is an indication that you support the way things were in education in this province. Quite frankly, the reports we've had for two decades have suggested the contrary, that now is the time for, the need for change.

the future. The minister's not satisfied with the status quo, my caucus colleagues are not satisfied with the status quo, and quite frankly there is no crisis in the education system in this province. We are going about a process of change which will lead to very positive changes to the education system.

There's no sinister motive here. The motive is very simple and straightforward. The government is seeking to re-establish a rejuvenated and new education system that simply benefits kids. It's about putting kids first and this legislation does that. The changes that this government has pursued, the tools that we have provided to the school system that change process to realization.

To conclude, I can simply say that the government does not take the changes we are making to the education system lightly. When you're dealing with the future of young people, that would be an irresponsible position to assume. The position we have taken is that the status quo is not acceptable. We can do more for students in this province. We can make a system that is better, and better understood by parents and students alike, and that is why we've gone about this in a very systematic way — again, a very systematic way — with a comprehensive package that was clearly articulated. There are no surprises here. The government clearly articulated its direction and intention to fundamentally reform the way school boards are governed and the way they're financed, and by investing in children in this province.

The Speaker: Further debate? Seeing none, Mr Johnson has moved third reading of Bill 62.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; this will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2314 to 2319.

The Speaker: All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Guzzo, Gary J.
Hardeman, Ernie
Hastings, John
Hodgson, Chris
Jackson, Cameron
Johns, Helen
Johnson, Bert
Johnson, David
Jordan, W. Leo
Kies, Frank
Leadson, Gary L.
Martinuk, Gerry
Mavres, Bart
McLean, Allan K.
Mushinski, Marilyn
Newman, Dan
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Parker, John L.
Pettit, Trevor
Preston, Peter
Rollins, E. J.
Ross, Lillian
Sampson, Rob
Shea, Derwyn
Skarica, Toni
Smith, Bruce
Snobelen, John
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Taubouch, David H.
Turnbull, David
Wetlaufer, Wayne
Willson, Jim
Wood, Bob
Young, Terence H.

Nays

Cullen, Alex
Curling, Alvin
Duncan, Dwight
Gerritsen, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hampson, Howard
Hoy, Pat
Kennedy, Gerard
Kornos, Peter
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Lankin, Frances
Lessard, Wayne
Mantel, Shelley
McGuinty, Dalton
McLeod, Lyn
Milash, Frank
Morn, Gilles E.
Patten, Richard
Phillips, Gerry
Ruprecht, Tony
Sergio, Mario
Silipo, Tony
Wildman, Bud

Agostino, Dominic
Barilucci, Rick
Bisson, Gilles
Boyd, Marion
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Michael A.
Caplan, David
Christopherson, David
Cleary, John C.
Cole, Mike
Conway, Sean G.
Crozier, Bruce

ayes are 61; the nays are 36.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

There being no further business, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 2322.

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CONTENTS

Monday 28 September 1998

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

Back to School Act, 1998, Bill 62,

Mrs McLeod	2016
Mr Wildman	2017
Mr David Johnson	2017
Mr Bradley	2017
Mr Duncan	2023
Mr Conway	2023
Mr Christopherson	2027
Mr Kennedy	2028
Report adopted	2034

Mr David Johnson

Back to School Act, 1998, Bill 62,

THIRD READINGS

Mr David Johnson	2034
Mrs Ecker	2034
Mr O'Toole	2035
Mr McGuinty	2035
Ms Lankin	2038
Mr Bissson	2039
Mr Hampton	2040
Mr Smith	2040
Agreed to	2042

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 28 septembre 1998

TROISIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 1998 sur le retour à l'école,

projet de loi 62, M. David Johnson	2039
M. Bissson	2039
Adoptée	2042

CHRON
XI
- 1233



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Second Session, 36th Parliament

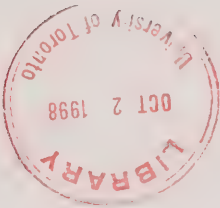
Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 29 September 1998

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de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 36^e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 29 septembre 1998



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L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 29 septembre 1998

exemplifies the application of northern initiative, hard work and ingenuity. It is the direct result of people coming together and working towards a common goal of creating jobs for the community.

In this context, the Opasatika plant presently employs 20 people, but it is anticipated that within the next three years the plant will mushroom and hire an additional 15 people. Even though the plant produces approximately 5,000 pounds of mushrooms each week, this volume is not nearly enough to satisfy the market demand in northern Ontario, and production will soon be increased to 9,000 pounds.

It is interesting to note that the mushroom plant initially benefited from provincial government funding under the NDP government about six years ago. We believe that access to government loans is important to northern economic development as far too many small businesses suffer from underfinancing. Unfortunately, this Conservative government continually fails to understand the need for a concerted approach to economic development and job creation in northern Ontario.

We believe that government can serve a positive role in helping businesses grow and prosper in northern Ontario. The Opasatika Northern Whites mushroom plant is a fine example of this partnership. We congratulate the people of Opasatika for their steadfast resolve to make this project a success.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr. R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I rise today in the House to speak of not one but 43 companies from the greater Peterborough area. Last week these companies received cheques totalling more than \$200,000 from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board for collectively improving their workplace health and safety performance.

These companies joined the WSIB-sponsored Greater Peterborough Safe Communities Incentive Program in an effort to reduce workplace injuries and illness. This program is sponsored by the city of Peterborough and the Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce and is funded with seed money from the Safe Communities Foundation. The participating companies reduced their collective costs by more than 60%.

Under this incentive program participating firms join a group policy. The group then receives 75% of all savings resulting from combined improvements in their health and safety performance.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 29 September 1998

*The House met at 1:30.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): There's no question that the government cutsbacks to our health care system are the number one issue for constituents in my Thunder Bay riding, but it causes just as much alarm when funding commitments to improve health care delivery are not met by this government.

In 1996 the government was directed to make an immediate investment of \$3 million to \$4 million to recruit specialists to Thunder Bay. This must happen so the waiting lists for urgent care can be shortened. The fact is that the Thunder Bay region is in dire need of trained specialists to meet our community needs. Despite this desperate situation, the government refuses to act.

The government is also stalling on tackling the problem of physician recruitment and retention to medically underserved areas as directed by a private member's resolution I put forward in June, which was supported by all members of this House. This government promised \$36 million a year to address this chronic problem, yet these dollars remain mostly unspent because the minister refuses the request of northwestern Ontario doctors and the northwestern chambers of commerce to ensure that an adequate physician complement is provided.

The minister is also failing nurse practitioners across this province by refusing to spend a promised \$5 million to better integrate these unique health care providers into the system. All of us in this House fast-tracked legislation so nurse practitioners can get to work in the province, yet the minister is now stalling.

Access to medical professionals and front-line service providers is the most vital component of patient care. I urge the minister to break this trail of broken health care promises —

The Speaker (Hon. Chris Stockwell): Thank you.

MUSHROOM PLANT

Mr. Len Wood (Cochrane North): After six years of extremely hard work, the community of Opasatika recently celebrated the official opening of the Opasatika Northern Chamignons du Nord Mushroom plant, better known as Northern Whites. The opening of this plant

to be a harsh blow as well to taxpayers, who have already been hard hit by this government's downloading. The Premier, in a letter to me, expresses sympathy for the 280 workers who lose their jobs. I tell you, those workers and their families and the communities of Niagara deserve and indeed are entitled to far more than just actively involved in the process to save those 280 jobs and indeed, failing that, put into place immediately the ground-work, the framework, for job training and job retraining and for alternative strategies to protect those families in the communities that are going to be seriously impacted. One question is what it is that Mike Harris can say about his Ontario when 280 good jobs, well-paying jobs, are lost in Welland — what, to be replaced by more minimum-wage, part-time, temporary jobs? That's not acceptable to the people of Welland or Niagara. It doesn't put food on their tables. It doesn't permit them to send their children to school.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West): This week the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals launches its Animal Violence Prevention Week. Violence in our communities and households is alarming, and one of the first signs of domestic abuse is abuse of pets. Police and social agencies recognize the link, and an abused pet is a good indicator of domestic violence in the home. Research has shown consistent patterns of animal cruelty among child, spouse and elderly abusers. The US Humane Society has launched First Strike, a campaign to increase public awareness of the connection between animal cruelty and human violence. The FBI recognizes that animal cruelty is associated with violent behaviour. Violent offenders, research has shown, have repeated animal cruelty. Animal cruelty can predict domestic abuse, criminal activity and even mental illness.

1340

I congratulate the Ontario SPCA in its 125th year and which is the feast of St Francis of Assisi, protector of all animals. May the gentle example of St Francis towards animals inspire us this week and help us to recognize in them the truly divine spark of friendship and love. Animals often understand us in a way we can't understand ourselves.

TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): The following is an example of government at its worst. Maybe this ought to be written up in Ripley's Believe It or Not. Imagine a truck carrying 40,000 pounds of explosives is involved in a single-vehicle accident, blows up in the town of Walden, which is in Nickel Belt, destroys 100 feet

The Greater Peterborough Safe Communities Incentive Program was launched in the spring of 1997 and is one of 10 officially designated safe communities across Ontario. I wish at this time to congratulate all 43 companies and their management and staff as well as the chamber of commerce and the city of Peterborough for having the foresight to move towards workplaces that will allow workers a safer and healthier work environment. Congratulations to all.

PREMIER'S REPORT CARD

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): We all know that Mike Harris likes to talk about his new report card and how it will be easier for parents to read and to know what kind of standards their students are meeting. A group of parents has decided that the report card format should work for premiers too. Here's a sample of the report card that these parents have given to Mike on his educational performance.

In English, for example: "Michael makes judgments and draws conclusions about ideas and written materials on the basis of evidence inconsistently and with limited understanding and reasoning. He has shown a good understanding of using media texts, editing his work to communicate only a few simple ideas." In English read-ing, writing, oral and visual communication, straight Rs for "remediation."

In mathematics: "Michael has difficulty justifying his choice or method for calculations, estimation, mental computation, etc. He has demonstrated only a limited ability for problem-solving and is unable to explain multi-step problems using rational numbers," and it goes on. Needless to say, Mike gets straight Rs for "remediation."

"Michael appears to have the ability to succeed but lacks the co-operative effort needed to produce a consistently acceptable product. Decisions lack thorough planning and sensitivity for the needs of his peers in this 'classroom' (Ontario). A remedial program will only be successful if Michael personally wants to continue successfully and is willing to incorporate the ideas of his peers, the people of Ontario, and not just a selected group of peers."

Parents presenting the report card feel a higher level of performance is in order for the Premier of Ontario.

PLANT CLOSURE

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): Welland and Niagara region were struck a major blow last week when Ucar International announced the closure of the Welland facility. This means that 280 jobs are going to be lost, jobs that are performed by hard-working, competent, skilled workers in Welland and area, jobs which have enabled them to support themselves and their families. As well, the municipality and the region are going to lose the tax assessment of this multi-acreage property. There's going

Neighbourhoods across this province are under siege and often feel neglected by a federal Liberal government which refuses to make substantive changes to —

Intercussions.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order, member for Hamilton Centre.

Mr Shea: Those neighbourhoods often feel neglected by the federal Liberal government, which refuses to make substantial changes to the Young Offenders Act or offer our neighbourhood improved security legislation. And despite the valiant efforts of community groups like the Parkdale Focus Community Watch and the Parkdale Business Improvement Association, prostitution remains a cancer on our communities. It spawns drug addiction, family breakdown, crime and neighbourhood decay.

The police tell me that the way we need to attack the problem is to vigorously pursue drive-by Johns. One very good way would be to impound their cars for a minimum of 48 hours. This will help send the message that our communities don't want their kind of business and want them off our streets. We hear, however, that this would pose an inconvenience to the families of Johns and further punish innocent bystanders. Frankly, the private pain of dealing with the betrayal of a John in the family is not my chief concern. My concern is for the community members and police who tell me that if we take away the demand for prostitution, we'll go a long way in dealing with many of the social problems.

Parkdale and other urban neighbourhoods across this province need effective tools to help empower them as they fight to improve their communities.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MINISTERIAL TRAVEL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 1998 LOI DE 1998 SUR L'OBLIGATION DE RENDRE COMPTE DES VOYAGES MINISTÉRIELS

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 64, An Act respecting Accountability for Ministerial Travel / *Projet de loi 64, Loi concernant l'obligation de rendre compte des voyages ministériels.*

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. **Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** The bill is very simple. All it asks for is accountability. It asks that a written summary of the purpose of the travel and any accomplishments resulting from the travel be included in a listing which is presented to the Legislative Assembly within 60 days; a detailed statement of all expenses incurred by the member, as well as by any staff accompanying the member; a listing of individuals and organizations contacted, and with whom the meetings were held; and a detailed summary of any contracts signed during travel outside the province.

of Highway 17, forms a crater 15 feet deep, measures 2.3 on the Richter scale, causes houses to move off their foundations, causes some people to lose partial hearing and forces some residents to become involved in trauma counselling so that they can sleep.

Do we hold a public inquiry into Canada's second-worst explosives accident? "No way," says Mike Harris.

No to my request; no to the request from the regional municipality of Sudbury; no to the people of Nickel Belt; and no to the 104 other municipalities, representing a population of 1.8 million people, who say, "We want a public inquiry."

Add to this the fact that the driver was charged and an official from the minister's office says the truck company was under investigation for a variety of issues before, at the time of and after the accident. Add to this the fact that the truck company continues to haul explosives.

Tell me, would Mr Ripley be happy with this in Bellevue or Not? I suggest to you this government should call a public inquiry now.

ISSUES IN HAMILTON

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I rise today to bring to the attention of the government, particularly the cabinet ministers, at least three major crises that are happening in my home town of Hamilton that quite frankly are the direct result of the Harris Tory agenda.

The first one is the issue of the property tax crisis. Hamiltonians are absolutely furious at the massive increase in property taxes that's a direct result of the actions of this government. In fact, in today's editorial in the *Hamilton Spectator*, the headline reads, "Tax Bill

"Hamilton-Wentworth hasn't seen an outcry about property taxes like this in many years. Petitions, protests and even threats to withhold tax payments are spreading in what amounts to a genuine crisis. Angry taxpayers are reeling from increases that in some cases are soaring into the red-line zone of several hundred and even thousands of dollars."

Aldermen are having to take the heat for this because there's a \$38-million shortfall in your supposedly revenue-neutral downloading, and you run around saying that you're cutting taxes. All you have done is put the pressure and responsibility on local aldermen. We've got a \$38-million deficit in hospital funding that is clearly going to result in loss of services for patients, and we still got Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital on the chopping block while your Solicitor General takes care of his own in Brockville.

PROSTITUTION

Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea): As the former Metro councillor for Parkdale-High Park, I still keep in touch with many of my former constituents. I'd like to discuss one of their concerns today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

EDUCATION

All we're asking for in this bill is that Mike Harris and the executive council, the cabinet of Ontario, be held responsible, the same way everyone else in this House is held responsible.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): In the absence of the finance minister — I assume he's not coming.

Interjection.

Mr McGuinty: I understand the Minister of Finance is on his way.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Do you want to stand it down?

Is the Minister of Education here? Is he coming? They are both coming. Stand them down?

Mr McGuinty: I'll go to the Chair of Management

Board. Minister, yesterday this House put off the immediate chaos for the 200,000 students affected by lockouts and strikes, but I want to look at the big picture now. Those children are back in class, but with rare exception, if you look at classrooms right across the province, there are no extracurricular programs taking place, there is no extra help available for our students, there are now students per teacher and there are fewer programs.

Your government has gone out of its way to publicly beat up on teachers, to the point now where their morale is at an all-time low. Last week the Premier told students that they won't be able to cut it in today's economy. He said that before a business audience.

What I'm going to ask you right now is very simple. What is it that you intend to do, now that you've put a Band Aid on that problem that arose yesterday, what do you intend to do now to provide stability to parents of children in schools in this province?

1350

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I welcome the Leader of the Opposition's question around education, because that is the number one priority, the number one social program in this country.

One of the fundamental principles this government has undertaken with Bill 160, with our education funding formula and with our achievement standards is to make sure there's equity in the system, that the funding formula is based on children's needs, that whether you grow up in Red Lake or in Rosedale, you have the dollars for textbooks.

We've also tried to prioritize funding into the elementary system with new textbooks, a tougher curriculum and testing so that parents know what their child is supposed to learn at the start of the year, how they're doing, how they compare to other children in their class and how that

The Speaker: Answer.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I find it atrocious that you'd play

politics with that and try to say that somehow —

Mr McGuinty: Thank you, Supplementarily.

right now; I just want to talk about old-fashioned stability. If you talk to teachers, parents, trustees and students, the number one thing they are seeking in Ontario education today is stability, nothing more and nothing less.

I've got a proposal for you. Here's a very simple three-part proposal. I call it the school stability plan. There are three parts to it:

(1) You will provide an independent review of the funding formula.

(2) You will permit one-year contracts to be signed until that funding review is complete.

(3) You will permit a one-year phase-in of the class size requirement provisions where you haven't given boards enough time to get the physical space to meet your requirements.

It's simple, it's straightforward, it helps go some way to restoring stability in the system and it costs almost nothing. Will you, Minister, agree to implement my school stability plan?

Hon Mr Hodgson: The Leader of the Opposition hits the issue right on the head when he says that they care not about standards. I think we should all care about

standards, we should all care about the improvement of quality. To stay at the status quo or do nothing and just get everyone so they're happy I think sacrifices our kids' futures. If you want to make sure we can compete in a global economy we have to have First World skills, and to get those First World skills we need a quality education that's equal throughout this province.

For you to stand up on behalf of the Liberal Party and say that you do not care about standards or that they're not important I think is indefensible and it goes along with other parts of your platform, where you talk about one of your new policy programs and say it is to restore vice-principals and principals to the bargaining unit. That has nothing to do with quality or standards. That's catering to special-interest union politics on union dues.

This government and this party believe we can improve the quality of education, and to do that everyone has to work together.

Mr McGuinty: Let's understand what the government's standards are, then, when it comes to public education. According to your standards, it's okay if our children aren't getting help with extracurricular activities. According to your standards, there's no extra help outside the classroom setting. According to your standards, it's all

right to have more students for every single teacher. According to your standards, it's OK to have fewer programs. Those are your standards, those aren't my standards, and I reject your standards.

I'm trying to introduce just a little bit of stability into public education in Ontario. I put forward a simple proposal. It costs almost nothing and it will go a long way towards ensuring that parents can be assured of a simple right, that their schools are going to remain open for at least the next year. That's all I'm trying to do. It's a simple proposal. Why will you not buy into it?

Hon Mr Hodgson: We realize that the Liberal Party

rejects our standards, which parents have demanded for almost a generation in this province, of improving the curriculum, of making sure we have province-wide

standardized tests to make sure we know how our young people are doing, so we can help improve them if they need help. We know that you reject the idea of focusing

more dollars into the classroom and making sure those dollars are equal throughout the whole province. We know

that you want to open up the commercial-industrial assessment base in Toronto to negotiate those new union

contracts and roll them right across the province. We know that. But we think the kids should come first, that we

should improve the quality of their education. The only way to do that — I know it ruffles the status quo and I

know it's been difficult. We're asking high school teachers to teach another 20 minutes that elementary

teachers already teach, and they prepare for every class. As a result of that four hours and 10 minutes we're

asking high school teachers to spend in front of the students teaching instructional courses or special ed or

remedial programs, the union has requested that they withdraw the extra-curricular activities. We think those extra-

The Speaker: New question.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Throughout the summer when I was travelling the province I met with small business owners. They came to me and said: "Listen, you've got to do something about the Mike Harris property taxes." This is something they hardly expected from your government. They expected you would understand how hard they work. They put it on the line, day in, day out, work long hours and create jobs. The last thing they expected from the Mike Harris government was whopping property tax hikes. What are you going to do, Minister? Right now, stand up and tell us how you're going to help these small businesses that are being savaged by your economic policies, having to contend with massive property tax hikes they can't cope with.

Finance: First of all, it has nothing to do with government policy. Municipalities in this province have been given several tools that they can use, such as phase-in,

different commercial values for small or medium-size commercial properties, different industrial-size tax rates for different industrial-size properties. They could create new property classes. They could opt for a cap like the city of Toronto has done, 2.5%, so that no small business person, as you point out, would have a property tax increase of more than 2.5% this year.

To date only about 60 municipalities out of 646 in Ontario have availed themselves of the use of any of those tools, but I can assure you the tools are there for municipalities to use, municipalities such as the city of Toronto, which has been very responsible in dealing with its taxpayers and its constituents. We are working with

municipalities —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Leader of the

official opposition.

Mr McGuinty: It's interesting. Apparently this gov-

ernment has nothing to do with property tax hikes that are being experienced by businesses right across the province. Of course they also have nothing to do with school

closures. This is all something that's done by other people. Small business doesn't buy that.

Let's look at some of the numbers: In Windsor, 69% of all small businesses are going to face an increase; York

region, they're looking at increases from 200% to 300%; Mississauga, 240%; Dundas, 70%-plus; London, 80%;

small businesses in the range of 100% to 900%, complaints of the Mike Harris government. Minister,

what is it, again, that you are going to do? Don't try to tell us it's the responsibility of the municipalities. The

municipalities didn't ask for this. You imposed it on them. You foisted it on them. What are you going to do to help

small business?

Hon Mr Eves: As I was saying in response to my first question, as recently as Friday, finance officials were

meeting with AMO officials to talk about the individual cases where municipalities did not use the tools that were

given to them, to talk about what they can now do to avail themselves of the usage of those tools. You rhymed off

several municipalities, York region being one of them. I ask you: What tool or tools did York region use to make

sure this didn't happen to their taxpayers and their constituents? The answer is: None, they didn't use one

single tool that was given to them. Municipalities like the city of Toronto, on the other hand, took a very responsible

approach to protecting their taxpayers and you don't have that effect in Toronto, and there's no need for it to happen

in any municipalities in Ontario if they avail themselves of

the tools that were given to them.

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I go to the Minister, I'm astonished at the insensitivity from my leader, shown to the difficulties that the small business community is facing as a result of your moves. As has been mentioned, in Hamilton, Dundas, Flamboro, we are

talking about an increase of 100% to 900%. Very few small businesses can absorb that without going out of business, or by layoffs. It is impossible.

Basically you are forcing them to close their doors.

Property owners are being devastated. Seniors by the hundreds are calling city hall in tears, afraid of losing their homes as a result of your downloading. Many of your businesses simply have fallen through the cracks of your inept rebate program that was put in place. You are

causing chaos and you're causing a tax crisis in the city of Hamilton.

Minister, when small business owners on the Mountain have called your member for Hamilton Mountain to

complain, do you know what they were told? "Don't pay

your taxes." That is the advice that's coming and we have

a number who will verify that. Will you review the inept

rebate program you put in place? Will you review the \$36-

million shortfall you have screwed the people of

Hamilton-Wentworth out of in downloading? Do you

agree with the advice given —

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister?

Hon Mr Eves: To the honourable member, first of all,

if he wants to deal in specifics, there's nothing that

prevented the regional municipality of Hamilton-

Wentworth from implementing a 2.5% cap, the same as

the municipality of Metropolitan Toronto did.

With respect to seniors, there's nothing preventing the

same municipality from implementing the tools that were

given to them to totally protect seniors from one cent of

property tax increases in that municipality. If they didn't

use those tools, perhaps constituents should be asking their

municipal representatives why they didn't use them.

Having said that, to date 37% of the municipalities in

Ontario have a 0% tax increase or a decrease this year;

another 30% have an increase of less than 5%. That's

67% of municipalities in Ontario having either a decrease

in taxes, no increase or an increase of —

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): A

third party are paying more than 5%? Incredible.

Hon Mr Eves: I say to the member for Scarborough-

Agincourt, do you want to talk about municipal tax

increases when your government was in power? We can

talk about that if you want a little later on —

The Speaker: New question, third party. Leader of the

third party.

TEXTBOOKS

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is

for the Minister of Education and Training. It's very clear

that yesterday you brought in your back-to-school

legislation because you had meddled so much in teacher

and board of education negotiations that you had to fix the

problem you'd created. In fact we find that you're

meddling elsewhere, and meddling is blowing up in your

face elsewhere. The latest fiasco was your much-bally-

hoed textbook purchase.

What I'd like to ask you about is Bliss Carman Senior

Public School in Scarborough. They were told by your

government that they had \$37,000 for textbook purchases. They placed an order with the publisher for new textbooks. Their order, given the prices they had always used, would have accounted for about \$28,000 and they would have had some money left over. Then they get a statement from your ministry saying that not only do they have no money left over, but they are over \$100 in the hole. Minister, who took the \$9,000 that they didn't spend?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and

Training): I don't think one would expect that I would

know school by school what the allocations are. I can

ensure that right across Ontario there would be equal

access to textbooks and materials — not only textbooks

but science equipment and computer software — for all

the children of Ontario, and we would do so on a basis

that saves taxpayers money.

The original RFP that went out attracted textbooks

worth \$68 million, but they were purchased on behalf of

the taxpayers of Ontario at a reduction of almost \$13

million; \$13 million in savings to the tune of a \$55-million

cost. Each and every board is assured its allocation in that

global context of \$100 million. We will give every board

the opportunity within that total allocation to spend every

nickel on textbooks, computer equipment and science

equipment.

Mr Hampton: Minister, you try desperately to miss

the point. I would suggest to you that there are a lot of

other schools out there like Bliss Carman Senior Public

School. You said to them, "You have \$37,000 for school

textbook purchases." They looked at the price they would

ordinarily get from the publisher, they did the calculations

and the figure came out to \$28,500. Then they get a

statement from your ministry saying that in fact the

textbooks cost over \$37,000.

The question here is, who took the \$9,000? Where did

it go? The school board knows and the teachers know

what their price was to the publisher. They didn't get a

new price list from the publisher. The publisher didn't

write back and say, "You owe me money." It was your

ministry that said, "You owe a further \$9,000." Who has

the \$9,000? The publisher doesn't have it. The school

doesn't have it. Who's got it?

Hon David Johnson: The reality is that the govern-

ment of Ontario through this program got the very best

possible price, not only for this particular school but for

these matters is that there are transportation and handling

costs and there is GST. It's a funny thing, but you have to

pay tax and that's a matter that's often overlooked.

I can assure you that the total cost of the books, the

handling and the taxes was the best possible purchase

price. I have, as a matter of fact, letters from publishers

indicating that they've given their best preferred price,

which we've simply passed along to the school boards,

and through that process achieved over 3.2 million books

to all of our schools across Ontario.

Mr Hampton: There's something here that doesn't quite calculate. We talked with the teachers and we talked with people at the board and we also contacted the publisher. The publisher said that the price they ordinarily give to the school includes things like transportation and handling. The publisher covers all that. Suddenly you're adding in a second transportation and handling charge. You're folding into the price some other charges. Who got these other charges? Who is this phantom that is siphoning off \$9,000 in textbook money from this school? Where do these extra charges come in? Who do you have a deal with that they get to add handling charges into all this? Where did the \$9,000 go? The publisher says he didn't get it. The school didn't get it. Where did these additional charges come in? Who got the money?

Hon David Johnson: I think we know that the leader of the third party is grasping at straws, as is not uncommon in this House. There are no extra charges, but the transportation and handling charges do have to be paid once and the taxes have to be paid once.

I have letters from the publishers to indicate that Ontario got the best possible price that could be achieved through bulk purchasing. This purchasing of over 3.2 million books across Ontario achieved the best possible price not only for students here in Toronto, not only for students in the large urban areas, but for students right across the province, in northern Ontario, where I might say the transportation costs are higher, and in rural areas. We got the best possible value, a \$13-million discount. We got 3.2 million books for our students and they're in the schools today and being used by our students.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): New question, leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: To the Minister of Health, but I would say to the Minister of Education, you'd better find out where the \$9,000 went, because school after school wants to know what you did with their money.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): To the Minister of Health: Last week in the Sudbury Star there was a letter asking for a commitment from your government to expand the use of nurse practitioners in northern Ontario health care. As we've pointed out to you before, expanding the use of nurse practitioners would be one very good way of dealing with underserviced areas. The letter actually calls on the candidates in the Nickel Belt by-election to lobby the government for increased funding for nurse practitioners. I'm here today on behalf of Blain Morton, the NDP candidate in Nickel Belt, to do just that.

Not a single penny of the \$5 million you announced for nurse practitioners has been spent. Meanwhile there are approximately 50 qualified nurse practitioners in underserviced northern Ontario communities who are unable to practise because you haven't provided the funding.

NURSE PRACTITIONERS

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): I'm very proud of the fact that this past February it was our government, under the leadership of then Health Minister Jim Wilson, that did officially proclaim the nurse practitioner legislation. As we had indicated, we are and we will be announcing very soon the allocation of the \$5 million in order that the nurse practitioners who are prepared can make sure they provide the needed services to the underserviced areas of our province, and we'll be making that announcement.

We have invested a tremendous amount of money in the Sudbury community. I'm very proud of the fact that we have added \$117 million in spending in Sudbury-Manitoulin in health care services, and I want to assure those people that additional money will be made available for this issue of the nurse practitioners.

Mr Hampton: The minister's empty words underline the problem. You've gone into Sudbury and you've made an announcement after announcement. Then community organizations and nurse practitioners try to access the money because they want to provide health care services and they find they can't access it. They are completely empty announcements, phony announcements. There are nurse practitioners who want to go to work but they can't go to work because they can't access the money that your government boasted about when you made the announcement. That's the question. You can't go on across this province making these announcements and then when people try to access it to improve health care, they find that it is empty. So I'm asking you again on behalf of Blain Morton, the NDP candidate in Nickel Belt, and all of those people in the Nickel Belt riding, many of whom live in underserviced areas communities, what are you going to do to make this money available so those nurse practitioners can go to work providing health care for people who need it? Don't give us another empty announcement.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Let me assure the leader of the third party that we have certainly done more for nursing than you did during your time in office. In fact, I was extremely pleased yesterday to have met with the members of the Nursing Task Force. We have actually listened to the nursing community. We are prepared to address the long-standing problems and issues of concern for nurses that were ignored by the previous governments. Last night we had the first official meeting of the Nursing Task Force, which is going to look at the problems that, as I say, are of long standing. In fact, as Barb Wahl, president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, indicated in speaking about the task force, "This is a significant first step," and we would agree.

Our government is working in partnership with nurses throughout this province and we will continue to ensure that the services they are providing will continue to be there.

guard, just as I've caught you off guard today. The new rules announced last week will mean cuts of about 65% in the NO_x produced by utilities in the US Northeast. This will make Ontario Hydro's emissions stick out like a sore thumb. In fact, I estimated that it will require at least a 60% reduction in Ontario Hydro's NO_x emissions.

Minister, unlike the Minister of the Environment, here is an opportunity for you to help reduce the 1,800 premature deaths that happen each year in the province of Ontario because of smog. This is already a crisis. My question is, are you going to pass a law so Ontario meets the US standards?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): The EPA standards are currently at the discussion stage in the United States; they are not law. Very clearly, we are already world leaders in emission standards and we're extremely pleased that the EPA is now at least going to meet Ontario Hydro's standards and perhaps surpass them. That's good for the environment, given that the Minister of the Environment here has constantly pointed out that it's very often the pollution from the United States that's creating the smog right here in southern Ontario.

We're very pleased with the direction the EPA is going in. Yes, Ontario Hydro and the successor companies to Ontario Hydro will meet very tough standards, will meet US standards, if we're going to be selling in the northeastern United States. We're 17% of the northeastern United States market now, and the Americans had better watch out, because our new Ontario Hydro and its successor companies are going to capture that customer base and return dividends to the shareholders, the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Supplementary.

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): Minister, you are not being a leader when it comes to environmental standards; you're quickly becoming an embarrassment when it comes to those standards.

You say that you're for green power and that Bill 35 is going to be good for the environment, but the Energy Competition Act, which is in clause-by-clause hearings at committee, doesn't commit you to tougher environmental standards so that communities like Windsor and Essex country and other southwestern Ontario communities can breathe a little easier.

The NDP have proposed amendments to the Ontario Energy Board Act that would tighten the rules against smog. They would make all generators selling power in Ontario comply with limits that are tighter than they are now. If you're not prepared to commit to meeting the US standards, will you at least support the NDP amendments so that we can have some clean air?

Hon Mr Wilson: Environmental groups in Ontario are extremely supportive of Bill 35. For the first time those producing green power will have access to the grid, something that your government and the Liberal government of its day never had the courage to do, that is, open up the grid, give customers choice and allow them for the

first time in the history of this province to buy more environmentally friendly power.

The hydro bills that consumers will receive beginning in the year 2000 will for the first time in the history of this province show the actual emissions. People will be able to know how their power was produced and they can exercise their choice to buy green power.

Tom Adams of Energy Probe said in the Ottawa Citizen on June 10, "Customers are going to get to see where their power comes from and what emissions are associated with it." So it's a consumer empowerment that should really help the clean power industries promote themselves as an alternative to polluting ones.

Greenpeace applauded the bill as an opportunity for the "significant chunk of the public that wants to buy green power." That was in the Toronto Star just recently on June 10.

Our nuclear asset optimization plan is all about improving the environment.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. I read last week that the federal Liberals came out with a study to say that the shortage of skilled workers in Canada is a myth. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that Ontario companies are in need of more skilled workers. What has your ministry done to ensure that Ontario companies have enough local skilled labour to meet their needs?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism): I want to thank the honourable member for Simcoe Centre for his question. As the member has indicated, the skilled labour shortage in Ontario is a reality. A 1996 Canadian Federation of Independent Business survey found that half of their members had a problem in finding qualified replacement workers.

A shortage of skilled people can discourage investment in this great province of ours, so as a government we have listened to businesses both large and small that are concerned about training and we are responding directly to the skills shortages that many of them have identified.

In last spring's budget we committed \$30 million to a new strategic skills initiative and I believe this program has started to take effect. Education is a priority for our government. We know we have to work with the business community in making sure that we work together to ensure that students are graduating with high skills so we can compete at the global level.

Mr Tascona: I thank the minister for his answer. What specifically can he tell us about the strategic skills program and how it will benefit Ontario workers and companies?

Hon Mr Palladini: The May budget announced \$10.9 million in funding for the first four projects and a commitment to a competitive process to allocate the remaining funding.

fact that Kingston historically has received a higher level of funding. We have increased funding in Kingston by 8% even though their levels of service are much higher than many of the colleagues who are right with you in your own Liberal caucus.

Mr Gerretsen: The caseload has increased by 15% over last year. There has not been one additional penny put into home care during the last two or three years. You know that these services are there so that people can be kept at home. I know you think, as you stated earlier this year, that if people think they're going to have vacuuming done for the rest of their life just because they've had surgery, that's not what the program is for. I know that is what you're thinking about this.

Your boss, the Minister of Health, has already closed a hospital, and her own officials in estimates earlier in June have stated that of the \$52 million you're taking out of health care in the Kingston area, only \$36 million is being returned to the area. When are you going to live up to your commitment to actually reinvest the money you're taking out of community health care and put some of these dollars back into home care? Two thousand patients in the Kingston area will be going without the home care they have had over the last number of years from now until at least March of next year. When are you going to do something about it and make sure the reinvestment takes place in the community?

Hon Mr Jackson: As the local member you should be aware of when these new dollars have been not only put into the Kingston area but actually spent. I want to remind the member opposite that in the last year of the Liberal government they were spending less than \$10 million in the Kingston area. Today we're spending \$23 million. It's a 134% increase in funding in the Kingston area.

I want the member opposite to know that we are increasing the funding to the community care access centres — in Kingston's case they've recently come through a labour dispute with one of the service providers; they have yet to complete their RFP process — where CCACs all across Ontario are receiving additional service units because it's costing less to perform these important care services for the seniors of Ontario.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): My question is to Minister of Labour. I want to raise the plight of a courageous group of workers who are fighting for dignity and their working lives. These less than 50 workers unfortunately are fighting both an unscrupulous employer and your own Harris government. These workers are at J.B. Fields, a local sock manufacturer in Trenton. Six months ago, when their employer demanded a 38% pay cut, they went on legal strike. This would have been a fair fight under the progressive NDP labour legislation, but under your anti-worker labour legislation, Bill 7, all the power went to the boss. Scabs were hired, strikers were intimidated, and last week these employees

ask the member opposite if he would consider the and yet in York region they're only receiving \$59 per person. I ask the member opposite if he would consider the

Today in Kingston they are receiving \$144 per person, criminalized against by previous governments.

areas of the province that previously have been dis-

ally received more care dollars do not overshadow those province, is to make sure that areas which have tradition-

I just announced \$83 million to increase budgets in this additional dollars we've added to home care this year, and

What we've been trying to do as a government with the utilization in the Kingston area.

ed that it is seeing and forecasting increased demand and actually been cut off. The CCAC in Kingston has indica-

like to correct the record that these services have not

like to thank the honourable member for his question. I'd

Care, minister responsible for seniors: First of all, I'd

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Long-Term

closed a hospital in our community.

These are patients who have had home care and need it. You've cut them off by \$1 million after you've already

and universities. Why have you cut these people off?

apparently there's plenty of money available for colleges

to these patients, why you have cut them off when

losing the home care services they currently have, explain

Minister, could you explain to these people who are

care after cutbacks.

read a headline just last week that 2,000 will lose home

imagine the shock the people in our area had when they

Kingston that has operated for 153 years. You can well

Minister of Health has already closed a hospital in

that the frail and elderly are staying longer at home. Your

patients are being discharged earlier from hospitals and

home care by appointing you as minister. You know that

government supposedly acknowledges the importance of

My question is to the Minister of Long-Term Care. Your

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):

HOME CARE

1430

much. New question.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you very

next program is —

1998. I want everyone to know that the deadline for the

The call for proposals for the first competitive round of

the automotive industry.

meet the skills needs of Ontario's most important sector:

and manufacturing. It's also a great program that will

providing advanced training in the automotive parts sector

for our young people. This program will assist in

with the private sector to make sure that we have the tools

These are the programs this government is working on

Research and Development Institute.

cheque for \$3 million — yes, \$3 million — for a new

partnership between Georgian College and the Industrial

Wilson, to be at Georgian College in Barrie to present a

honourable member and my colleague the Honourable Jim

This morning I had the pleasure, along with the

available under what is now a balanced Labour Relations Act in Ontario.

1440

SOCIAL POLICY REVIEW

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. I understand that you were at the premiers' conference in Saskatoon back in August and that the premiers reviewed the status of negotiations on their framework agreement for the social union. It's indeed important to Canadians that health and social programs be effective, secure and sustainable. As the Ontario representative to the ministers' council on social policy review and responsible for these negotiations, could you update the House on the progress of these negotiations?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): I think all the members of the House are interested in the future of Canada and the importance of how we work together in our social union. Our discussions with the premiers in Saskatoon were extremely positive in that everyone came away united in their efforts to make our health care programs and our social programs more accountable, more accessible and more fair across the country.

I think of interest to this House would be that Quebec is now at the table in these negotiations. We're all hoping that it will work in favour of a united Canada.

I'd also like to say that governments are more committed than ever to working together, especially with our federal colleagues. We know that unilateral decisions, especially with regard to funding and funding reductions, do nothing to improve our health care and our social programs in Canada and we want to work towards more togetherness and more unanimity and more discussions.

Mr Galt: At the Saskatoon conference, I understand that the premiers directed ministers to meet with the federal government, with the co-chair, the Honourable Anne McLellan, for a negotiating meeting with the ministers as soon as possible and that a draft agreement be drawn up before the end of this current year. Minister, can you update us further on the progress made in this regard?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: Yes, we have been meeting since Saskatoon in August. On September 9, the ministers and the territorial ministers responsible across the country met to work and make more progress on the mechanism on the new way of dealing across Canada and with the federal minister. We'll be meeting this week actually, on October 2 in Edmonton, with Ms McLellan. We are extremely positive about positive outcomes from that meeting. Only in generalities right now, and this is very complicated for the general public, but we know there has to be a better way, to get rid of the overlap and duplication, to get rid of the unilateral decision-making, especially around funding with regard to the federal government, and to talk more to each other in advance about the programs that are really important for Canadians: social services, health care and higher education.

were told by the employer that they can forget about coming back to the jobs they had before.

The problem these workers have is that your government is encouraging this kind of action by the type of labour legislation and anti-worker legislation that you've promoted and passed. Minister, is this your idea of how to make Ontario a better place to live, work and raise a family?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour): I thank the honourable member opposite for the question about J.B. Fields in Trenton. There was a strike that commenced there March 22, 1998. I'm sure the honourable member knows that the Ministry of Labour extended conciliation and mediation facilities to both parties, as is the duty and the process of the Ministry of Labour. The Ministry of Labour is not pro-management or pro-union; it is pro-negotiated-settlement. The ministry has made every effort in this instance, as it does in other instances, to avail the ministry's people, the expert people that we have in mediation and conciliation, so that hopefully the best possible result can be obtained, which is always a negotiated settlement.

Mr Christopherson: That does not hold. If you were actually caring about workers and promoting negotiated settlements, then you wouldn't have passed legislation that lets this employer hire scabs to go into that workplace and do the jobs of those legitimate legal strikers. That's what is prolonging this strike — your legislation.

I'll tell you what these workers need. They need a government like the NDP that's going to make it illegal to hire scabs again. That's what they really need.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order. Stop the clock. Member for Hamilton Centre.

Mr Christopherson: Mr Speaker, I really wish the government members would show that much compassion and caring about these workers and their families, who have been out on strike for over six months because of your legislation that lets the employer hire scabs. That's the bottom line.

Minister, you have to stand in your place and tell us how allowing the employer to hire scabs that prolonged this strike and kept those workers out of their jobs for over six months is somehow good for them and good for the economy of this province.

Hon Mr Flaherty: To the member, it is true that under his government we were out of the mainstream in labour relations, that we were in the minority in Canada and in North America in prohibiting the hiring of replacement workers. It is true that under the previous government employers, including small business employers, could be bankrupted by strikes in the situation where they could not hire replacement workers, that there was no business and that there were no jobs.

The Ministry of Labour's role is to provide mediation and conciliation. If there has been improper behaviour, if there has been activity by the employer in the situation described, then the Ontario Labour Relations Board is available to the parties to seek the remedies that are

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): My question is for the Minister of Education. Last night the school accommodation review committee had a meeting at one of the schools in my area to review the possible closings of 29

schools. Three of the schools in question are in my riding and two of them are leased by the Catholic school board from the public school board. All three of the schools are full to capacity. I've been told, and the possible closure is solely due to the funding formula which you have instituted and the pupil accommodation policy which you have also instituted. My question is this: Because of your imposed arbitrary restrictions, will you allow the closing of schools when operating at full capacity?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): It seems difficult to me to comprehend why a school board would close a school that is full to capacity. The decision and the responsibility clearly rests with the school board. I guess the Toronto school board in this particular case.

I might say that same school board has some 80 schools that it doesn't use for public purposes any more. Some of them are empty, some of them are used for administration purposes, some for storage, and some they have leased out to either the private or the separate sector. I don't know why the board would choose, if indeed it has, to close a school which is full to capacity.

I will say, though, that schools over the years have been closed. Boards have chosen and made this decision to close schools over the years. For example, between 1985 and 1989, when your party was in power, school boards across Ontario chose to close 136 schools. I am proud to stand here today and say that today we announced a new funding formula, which will involve a whole host of new schools. Some 120,000 students will benefit in Ontario because of the new funding formula that we've announced details of this afternoon.

Hon David Johnson: The curious aspect of this is that today I did just announce the funding formula, and the funding formula contains \$26 million for leased schools over the next year, because we recognize that school boards have made arrangements for leased schools and need that kind of support.

I'm very proud of the funding formula. It does give boards that need the new schools. They will make the flexibility to the boards. We will flow money through the decisions of where to build. This program will be the

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

largest one-year program, largest three-year program in the history of the province in terms of about \$1.5 billion for funding in the new school construction across the province over the next three years, to assist 120,000 students in getting the proper accommodation.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): My question is for the Minister of Health. On April 8, 1998, you announced increased funding for childhood cancer care at the Hospital for Sick Children. Although the proven need for increased care is equally as urgent in the other regions of Ontario, you have not responded to repeated requests for equitable funding.

At the Children's Hospital of Western Ontario, the two staff oncologists are trying to care for three times the number of children set out in the provincial standards for childhood cancer care. Their request for \$3 million is similar to the request you agreed to at Sick Kids and it is supported by both the Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario and officials in your ministry.

Will you explain today to parents and physicians in southwestern Ontario why the children with cancer that they care for continue to receive substandard care six months after Sick Kids got its money?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): As the member opposite has indicated, we do work and plan to continue to work with POGO, which is the Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario. In fact, very recently POGO recommended that we set up four satellite pediatric oncology units in the province in order that we can ensure that young children and young adults, after they have received the surgery and they need the long-term care and treatment, will be able to get that treatment in their own communities. I am very pleased that we were able to make that additional funding available for four satellite centres throughout this province.

We will continue to respond to the needs, that the needs are addressed. We will continue to accept the advice of POGO, and in the months ahead we will be making further announcements in order that we can support these children who suffer from cancer.

1450

PETITIONS

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. "Whereas heritage is vitally important to the social and economic health of Ontario communities and Ontario residents; and

"Whereas community museums, galleries and heritage organizations work hard to protect, promote, manage and develop our provincial heritage resources; and

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I have a petition addressed to the assembly that reads as follows:

"Whereas the Minister of Education intends on taking more than \$1 billion out of Ontario's education system at a time when there is an increasing consensus on the importance of supporting our schools and classrooms; and

"Whereas per pupil funding in the province of Ontario now ranks below other jurisdictions, such as Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri and Nebraska; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has now embarked on an advertising campaign which will cost the taxpayers of Ontario over \$1 million; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government could cancel that advertising campaign and use the \$1 million which belongs to the taxpayers of Ontario for the purchase of 40,000 textbooks;

"We, the undersigned, call on the Mike Harris government to cancel their blatantly partisan, self-serving political advertising campaign and redirect the taxpayers' \$1 million to classroom funding."

I'm signing my signature to it.

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition to save the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital.

"To the Honourable Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned citizens of Hamilton and the surrounding communities, beg leave to petition the government of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has announced the closure of Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital; and

"Whereas community-based mental health care providers will bear the brunt of this ill-fated decision by being forced to meet what is sure to be an increased demand for their services; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario is not adequately monitoring community-based mental health services for their effectiveness, efficiency or whether they are delivering the agreed-upon programs according to the 1997 annual report of the Provincial Auditor; and

"Whereas the community pays the price for cuts to mental health care;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned citizens of Hamilton and area who care about quality, accessible and publicly accountable mental health care for all Ontarians, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately set aside all recommendations to divert and/or close Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital and the programs and services it provides."

"Whereas the provincial government has a responsibility to the people of Ontario to promote the value of heritage and heritage conservation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has abdicated their responsibility for heritage by cutting support to community museums, galleries and heritage organizations; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has not implemented a new heritage act that would give communities the ability to better protect heritage sites; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has not undertaken meaningful consultation with Ontario's heritage community;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide stronger support to Ontario's heritage institutions and organizations and to work with the people of Ontario to establish a new heritage act."

I'm pleased to sign that petition along with the representative from the Serbian heritage museum on Tecumseh Road in Windsor-Riverside.

PROTECTION FOR
HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): I just wanted to recognize the Minister of Health for setting up the Nursing Task Force. In that respect:

"Whereas nurses in Ontario often experience coercion to participate in practices which directly contravene their deeply held ethical standards; and

"Whereas pharmacists in Ontario are often pressured to dispense and/or sell chemicals and/or devices contrary to their moral or religious beliefs; and

"Whereas public health workers in Ontario are expected to assist in providing controversial services and promoting controversial materials against their consciences; and

"Whereas physicians in Ontario often experience pressure to give referrals for medications, treatments and/or procedures which they believe to be gravely immoral; and

"Whereas competent health care workers and students in various health care disciplines in Ontario have been denied training, employment, continued employment and advancement in their intended fields and suffered other forms of unjust discrimination because of the dictates of their consciences and morals; and

"Whereas the health care workers experiencing such unjust discrimination have at present no practical and accessible legal means to protect themselves;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and establish-ing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

I am pleased to present this on behalf of our whip and also on behalf of myself.

I proudly add my name to these Hamiltonian petitioners.

PROTECTION FOR

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South): I'm pleased to

bring forward a petition from about 80 residents of the Dunnville, Wellandport and Wainfleet area. It's about health-care-conscience legislation and it reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of and unjust discrimination against health care workers to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination." Again, there are about 80 signatures and I sign mine in support.

HOTEL DIEU HOSPITAL

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This petition

is to the government of Ontario.

"Since the Hotel Dieu Hospital has played and continues to play a vital role in the delivery of health care

services in St Catharines and the Niagara region; and

"Since Hotel Dieu has modified its role over the years

as part of a rationalization of medical services in St Catharines and has assumed the position of a regional

health care facility in such areas as kidney dialysis and

oncology; and

"Since the Niagara region is experiencing underfunding in the health care field and requires more medical services

and not fewer services; and

"Since Niagara residents are required at present to

travel outside of the Niagara region to receive many

specialized services that could be provided in city

hospitals and thereby not require local patients to make

difficult and inconvenient trips down our highways to

other centres; and

"Since the Niagara hospital restructuring committee

used a Toronto consulting firm to develop its recom-

mendations and was forced to take into account a cut of

\$40 million in funding for Niagara hospitals when

carrying out its study; and

"Since the population of the Niagara region is older

than that in most areas of the province and more elderly

people tend to require more hospital services;

"We, the undersigned, request that the government of

Ontario keep the election commitment of Premier Harris

not to close hospitals in our province, and we call upon the

Premier to reject any recommendation to close Hotel Dieu

Hospital in St Catharines."

I affix my signature as I'm in full agreement.

ABORTION

Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie): I have a petition which was forwarded to me by the Honourable Al

Palladini. It in turn was directed to him by John Lawlor of the Knights of Columbus. It's a petition that was signed by members of the St Mary Immaculate and Our Lady Queen of the World Catholic churches in Richmond Hill. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded over 45,000 abortions in 1993 at an estimated cost of \$25 million; and

"Whereas pregnancies are not therapeutic procedures; and

"Whereas the vast majority of abortions are done for

reasons of convenience or finance; and

"Whereas the province has the exclusive authority to

determine what services will be insured; and

"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require

funding for elective procedures; and

"Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is in

fact hazardous to women's health;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative

Assembly of Ontario to cease from providing any tax-

payers' dollars for the performance of abortions."

There are some 800 signatures on this petition and I

affix my signature to it.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): I

have a petition that deals with the downloading of costs of

services in our province. It states:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has dumped the

financing of ambulances, social housing and public health

care services on to the backs of municipalities; and

"Whereas this irresponsible action will create a short-

fall for local governments throughout Ontario; and

"Whereas local councils have been forced to raise

property taxes by as much as \$200 per household or cut

services; and

"Whereas Mike Harris called municipal representatives

'whiners' when they tried to explain to him that his

proposal was unfair and would create gaps in important

services such as the delivery of public health care

services; and

"Whereas the Minister of Municipal Affairs and

Housing accused local representatives of being oppor-

tunistic simply because they attempted to point out that the

Mike Harris proposal was unfair and primarily designed

to fund his ill-advised tax scheme; and

"Whereas the Harris government has refused to listen

to the representatives who work more closely with their

constituents;

"We, the undersigned, call on the Mike Harris gov-

ernment to scrap its downloading plan, which has caused

either an increase in property taxes or unacceptable cuts to

important local services."

I have signed my name to the petition as well, as I'm in

full agreement.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr John R. Baird (Nepaan): I have a petition submitted by Rev Ross Lambton, the pastor of St Maurice Church, which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:
"Whereas nurses in Ontario often experience coercion to participate in practices which directly contravene their deeply held ethical standards; and

"Whereas pharmacists in Ontario are often pressured to dispense and/or sell chemicals and/or devices contrary to their moral or religious beliefs; and

"Whereas public health workers in Ontario are expected to assist in providing controversial services and promoting controversial materials against their consciences; and

"Whereas physicians in Ontario often experience pressure to give referrals for medications, treatments and/or procedures which they believe to be gravely immoral; and

"Whereas competent health care workers and students in various health care disciplines in Ontario have been denied training, employment, continued employment and advancement in their intended fields and suffered other forms of unjust discrimination because of the dictates of their consciences; and

"Whereas the health care workers experiencing such unjust discrimination have at present no practical and accessible legal means to protect themselves;

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

I'm adding my own signature thereto.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario on the subject of education advertising.

"Whereas the Minister of Education intends on taking more than \$1 billion out of Ontario's education system at a time when there indeed is an increasing consensus on the importance of supporting our schools and classrooms; and

"Whereas per pupil funding in the province of Ontario now ranks below other jurisdictions, such as Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri and even Nebraska; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has now embarked on an advertising campaign which will cost the taxpayers of Ontario over \$1 million; and

does not constitute an important public announcement and instead is clearly an abuse of public funds, because they

HOSPITAL RESTRICTURING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Harris cutbacks have resulted in an anticipated \$38-million deficit at the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has drastically cut funding to hospitals across Ontario, leaving hospitals facing crippling deficits and massive cuts to services; and

"Whereas the Ontario Hospital Association is projecting a deficit of \$200 million to \$400 million for nearly 200 hospitals in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp will receive \$4 million less in revenue from the Ministry of Health and other sources and needs an immediate cash infusion to meet its costs and purchase life-saving equipment;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that Mike Harris and the government of Ontario stop underfunding Ontario's hospitals to fund the tax cuts of the wealthy and act immediately to restore funding to the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp so they can continue providing quality health care services to the people of Hamilton-Wentworth."

I proudly add my name to these local citizens.

COMPENSATION FOR HEPATITIS C PATIENTS

Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington): I have a petition that has been given to me by the Minister of Health who, as you know, according to the rules of this House, cannot present petitions in the Legislature. The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas numerous Ontarians have contracted the deadly disease hepatitis C through no fault of their own, as a result of which they have been burdened with various expenses in addition to permanently impaired health and the accompanying mental anguish;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to direct the Minister of Health to initiate no-fault payments to those who have contracted hepatitis C, in accordance with the first recommendation of the Krever report."

Because I agree with this, I am signing this document as well.

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, call on the Harris government to cancel their blatantly partisan and self-serving political advertising campaign and redirect the taxpayers' \$1 million to classroom funding."

"Whereas the Mike Harris government could cancel the advertising campaign and use the \$1 million which belongs to the taxpayers of Ontario for the purchase of 40,000 textbooks;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, demand that Mike Harris and the government of Ontario stop underfunding Ontario's hospitals to fund the tax cuts of the wealthy and act immediately to restore funding to the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp so they can continue providing quality health care services to the people of Hamilton-Wentworth."

I proudly add my name to these local citizens.

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in her office.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

Bill 62, An Act to resolve labour disputes between teachers' unions and school boards / Projet de loi 62, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail opposant des syndicats d'enseignants et des conseils scolaires.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INSTRUCTION TIME: MINIMUM STANDARDS ACT, 1998 LOI DE 1998 SUR LES HEURES D'ENSEIGNEMENT :

Mr David Johnson moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 63, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to instructional time / Projet de loi 63, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne les heures d'enseignement.

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): At the outset, I would indicate that I wish to share my time with the members for Simcoe Centre, Northumberland and Middlesex.

And starting off this debate, which has to do with the definition of "instructional time," to reiterate what the Premier of Ontario said last week to a large gathering of some 1,500 people, I believe, that we do have excellent teachers in the province of Ontario. They work hard, they're extremely valuable and valued, and perhaps we can't say that enough. Their role is instrumental in the future of the province of Ontario in moulding the young people and teaching the young people, guiding the teachers and over the years we indeed have been well served by the teachers of the province of Ontario.

The standard that we're talking about here today, instructional time, is part of a very much larger package of quality improvements, of standards, that this government has brought forward and has implemented.

I might say the role of the provincial government is to bring forward these kinds of broad standards. Then the role of the local school boards is to implement within that broad framework of standards the specific programs within the jurisdiction of that board, the specific programs at the local school level. That is the role of the school boards. Then obviously the role of the teachers within that

The question comes up, how do we define the instructional time? Given that we have through this standard determined that the instructional time should be 1,250 minutes per week, four hours and 10 minutes per day, how do we define what is included within those allotments of time? Certainly across Canada teachers are faced with the same sort of situation. In other provinces, I might say, the amount of instructional time is greater on average than the four hours and 10 minutes.

1510

I suppose I should clarify up front that the four hours and 10 minutes pertains to the secondary level, to secondary schools, not to the elementary schools. The elementary schools have a different standard of 1,300 minutes of instructional time per week, which obviously is greater than the 1,250. The elementary teachers do spend more time in the classroom today, have spent more time in the classroom over the years, and there's no issue there. That standard has not been changed.

But we are talking about the secondary school teachers in Ontario. Comparing the situation in Ontario with other provinces, we find that about seven other provinces do have a higher amount of instructional time than the four hours and 10 minutes, and the elementary teachers do as well, as I mentioned.

Through the debate last year on Bill 160 I think it was fairly clear when we were talking about instructional time that we were talking about teachers in the classroom teaching students. That I believe is a definition that parents would recognize, that parents would say makes sense. Certainly it was what the government had intended through the years. We feel that's the way that instructional time was intended and understood by the people of Ontario, but it had never been defined in an act.

It's perhaps interesting that some of the definitions and some of the terms that are involved in education are not defined in an act. The word "pupil," for example, is not defined anywhere in any particular act. So it's perhaps not too strange that "instructional time" has not been defined. During the recent negotiations there have been some new interpretations put on the words "instructional time." These new definitions have been put on perhaps to make a better match with the lower amount of instructional time of three and three quarter hours that had been the norm in the past, perhaps in an attempt to get back to those lower

framework is to do the fine job they've been doing over the years to teach the individual students in the classes, within the context of board policy and within the context of the broader standards set by the province. So today we are participating in a debate in terms of the setting of one of those standards for the quality of education in Ontario.

We have asked the secondary school teachers, through Bill 160 and through this definition today, to spend 25 more minutes in the classroom. The instructional time in the past has measured three hours and 45 minutes. The standard that we set of 1,250 minutes per week of instructional time boils down to four hours and 10 minutes a day on average, which exceeds the previous three hours and 45 minutes by some 25 minutes a day.

levels. The negotiations involving the union had focused on other activities which were not classroom activities, such as monitoring the cafeteria during lunch period, for example, or monitoring the halls at various times during the day. These were the kinds of new issues that popped up and somehow got included within instructional time. It was never our intention that they would be included.

I don't think if you were to poll the parents of Ontario they would say that monitoring the cafeteria is part of classroom activity. I'm sure parents would say that somebody needs to monitor the cafeteria, somebody needs to monitor the hall. These are important activities and there should be some assurance that they're undertaken during the course of the normal day, but they are not classroom activities. I agree. I certainly feel that our cafeterias should be safe places for the students, our halls should be safe places, but they're not classroom activities. Bear in mind that when we're talking about four hours and 10 minutes of classroom activities, that leaves a big chunk of the day beyond the four hours and 10 minutes that teachers would have which they could devote to preparation time, for example, which I consider to be most important. It's most important that both elementary and secondary teachers have preparation time, but beyond preparation time perhaps time could be spent on other activities such as hall monitoring or supervising the cafeteria — certainly, I know many teachers are involved in extracurricular activities — or any number of meetings that they need, any number of activities that would take place that teachers would be involved with beyond the instructional classroom time. All of that's fine, but not in the instructional time.

The issue came up a few weeks ago that some agreements had actually been signed between boards and unions which took away with the definition of instructional time that we as a government contemplated. My response at that time was, "I don't agree with their interpretation of the words 'instructional time' in certain instances if they have gone beyond what is in the classroom." However, I must admit that they did so in the absence of a definition in the act. There was no definition in the act to guide them. So in that event we had indicated, and we continue to indicate, that any contracts which were agreed upon in the absence of a definition of instructional time, we would allow them to stand, we would not rip them open. But once we clarified in the act for all to see what we understand, what I believe parents understand, is the definition of instructional time, then that definition of course must be obeyed as the standard, as regulations pertaining to the rest of education must be obeyed as well.

That's where we stand today. We now have Bill 63, which was severed from Bill 62, the bill we considered yesterday. In an act that's worthy of this House, we did, through an all-party agreement, agree to proceed with Bill 62 and get the kids back to their schools today. I'm delighted that so many students are back in their classrooms today where they rightfully belong, where they should have been all through this period of time, and the teachers are back in the classroom. This is an act that

looks well upon this House, that we all got together and allowed that act to be dealt with so that the students are back in the classroom.

We did have to sever out this part of the bill and we're dealing with it here today.

I only note with a tinge of sadness, though, that the vote last night was not unanimous, because I would have thought that all the parties of this House would have voted unanimously to have the kids back in class today. I'm just sorry that colleagues from the Liberal and New Democratic parties were not able to support the bill that resulted in all the children being back in their classes today. So that's the one sad aspect of this bill. But the government did have enough votes, fortunately, to muster together to overcome the odds of the opposition parties

and get all the students back in —

Interjection.

Hon David Johnson: It's called the opposition. I suppose that's true, but one hopes that every once in a while the opposition is able to support a government bill.

Mr Deryn Shea (High Park-Swansea): Give some thought to it.

Hon David Johnson: Yes, give some thought to it. Thoughtful opposition.

Mr Shea: Thoughtful opposition would be wonderful. When we're talking about rights, there are rights of students to have education in Ontario as well. In the minds of parents, that is a very important right, that the school should be open, that the teachers should be there, that the students should have access to those schools.

Interjection.

Hon David Johnson: Yes, there is certainly a balance that needs to take place. I consider that where the students were resting was the very, very heavy side of the scale. It weighed very heavily on my conscience and I'm sure very heavily on the consciences of all in this House that we needed to act. Just the fact that the opposition parties at least allowed the debate to take place I think is a signal of a little bit of co-operation. If you had only voted for it too, that would have been so much better.

Mr Gilles Poullet (Lake Nipigon): You're over-reacting.

Hon David Johnson: I'm always hopeful. This is part of the quality, having teachers teach in the classroom. What we're talking about in this bill is what does constitute instructional time. First of all, it's on the regular timetable of the teacher, it's time on the regular timetable.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algonoma): You were hopeful we would vote for the bill. We were hopeful that you would accept our amendments.

Hon David Johnson: I'm sorry to dash your hopes, but we had to get the children back into the schools.

Mr Wildman: You could have accepted our amendments and still got them back.

Hon David Johnson: Mr Speaker, I'm trying to avoid this heckling now and carry on and say that the instructional time involved a course or program that is eligible

longer take place. In that context, of course we were pleased to supplement this year the textbooks in the schools at the elementary level with an initiative which doubled and brought in 3.2 million new textbooks to this point and we're barely over the half-way point in the program. We spent only \$55 million out of \$100 million. I still have another \$45 million in this fund to put to good use. I can assure the taxpayers that we will put it to good use, and we'll put it to good use by ensuring that we get the best value in a bulk purchase, a reduced price in a bulk purchase.

Some 3.2 million textbooks have been distributed through the elementary level already. Within the upcoming months we will see the remaining \$45 million being directed towards more textbooks, science equipment to support the new curriculum, software for our students to assist them in their learning, to assist their teachers. All of these purchases will assist our teachers, will assist our students and will enhance the quality of education in our classrooms.

The curriculum has been revised at the elementary level. I think perhaps one of the strongest features of the quality curriculum that has been introduced by this government is to introduce a new and rigorous curriculum at the elementary level. That curriculum involves mathematics and language, which were introduced just over a year ago and, more recently, the arts, social studies, science and technology, the first real technology aspect of the curriculum that we've had in decades. It's a very exciting new curriculum and it has expectations year by year so that the students, the parents, the teachers, everybody knows year by year what a student should be taught and what a student should know.

That is brand new as well. Formerly, we didn't have that year-by-year expectation, so a parent really wouldn't know at the end of the year what their student should have learned during the course of that particular year. But now the parent can get a copy of the new curriculum. I encourage anybody watching, anybody who wishes to get a copy of the elementary curriculum to write in. We'd be happy to send you a copy and you will know exactly year by year what each student should have learned in all of the elementary courses, whether it's art or whether it's physical education and health or any other component. I might say that at the secondary level we have been fortunate to receive the assistance of many teachers across Ontario to rewrite the secondary curriculum as well. That rewrite is being undertaken right at the present time. The first drafts of the new curriculum have already been issued. The process is well underway. The new curriculum at the secondary level will start in the fall of 1999, about a year from now, after careful consideration.

It is being written by teachers in conjunction with representation from the colleges and universities across Ontario. It is open for public scrutiny. I would encourage anybody who's interested to participate, to see it, to be involved, to have input into the process and, again, to contact the Ministry of Education. This is an open process that we invite all stakeholders in education to be part of

for credit at the high school level. "Eligible for credit," so it must be a credit course, or a special education program. We have special education programs in Ontario and I'm pleased to say that we have protected funding for over a billion dollars worth of special education programming in Ontario, the first government to protect the special education program in Ontario. I'm getting reports back now from boards that are actually expanding their special education program in Ontario. As a result of the funding envelope that we have protected and given to the boards, the special education program is improving in Ontario and that's a source of great pride to me. The remedial classes that are regularly scheduled by teachers, English as a second language classes regularly scheduled, apprentice-ship programs, co-operative programs — these are the kinds of programs in the classroom that constitute instructional time. I think they make sense.

These are the kinds of activities that we want our teachers doing. Direct contact with their students during credit courses, special education courses, apprenticeship programs, co-operative education programs; direct contact, teaching, guiding and mentoring our students, our young people in Ontario. Teachers doing the job that they do so well, that they're so well qualified for, that they're so valued for. Those are the components of instructional time and those are the components which will enhance the quality of our education in Ontario.

That's what the issue is about: Are we in favour of that quality approach or are we opposed to that quality approach? That's what this debate is about. I can tell you that I for one am definitely in favour of that quality approach, having teachers do what they do best.

There are many other aspects of the quality agenda in Ontario in which this government has taken the initiative. I would just like to comment on a few of them for a few brief moments.

For the first time in Ontario, classroom spending in general has been defined and protected. We have now defined classroom monies that boards will have and non-classroom monies that boards will have. The classroom monies are protected. Boards cannot take monies from the components of the classroom funding and spend them on non-classroom activities, such as administration or furniture for the bureaucrats or big buildings for the central office or those types of activities. They are restricted and must spend the classroom funding in the classroom on the components of the classroom.

Those components are obviously teachers, supply teachers, the guidance and librarians we've included in that category, the textbooks for the students, the para-professionals that support the classroom such as the speech pathologists. These are the kinds of activities that are protected. Money cannot be taken away from them and spent on administration or bureaucracy.

That's never happened before in Ontario. We do hear stories all about the province of Ontario on textbooks, for example, and how our children are being deprived and have been deprived year by year of textbooks, the shortage of textbooks, inadequate textbooks. That can no

The writing of a new secondary school curriculum, a curriculum that will focus more on the basics, will have a little more emphasis on mathematics, a little more emphasis on language, a little more emphasis on science, a curriculum that will be more rigorous, more challenging to our secondary students, and it will work hand in glove with the curriculum that we've already developed at the elementary level.

1530

These are exciting times for education in Ontario. "Quality" is the key word: better curriculum, more challenging curriculum, province-wide testing, testing that has been assisted by the teachers. The kind of testing we've done at grade 3 across the province has been designed by teachers to ensure its success. I think that one of the reasons we've been so successful in coming forward with quality products in education, that we've sought and received the guidance and assistance of the teachers of Ontario.

The report cards are another aspect of the quality improvement. New report cards will be available right across the province at the elementary level by Christmas in all schools, report cards designed with input from the teachers of Ontario, and there is the electronic version of the report cards, again designed by teachers and educators across Ontario.

What else have we done? We've capped the average class size. I've spoken on this issue a few times and I think it's important, because average class sizes have been going up and up at the elementary level, year after year, and at the secondary level. Between 1991 and 1997, for example, the average class size in the province of Ontario rose at the secondary level, rose year by year at the elementary level, and teachers are being asked to teach more and more students in their classrooms. This is not fair to the teachers. This is not fair to the students. We, as the first government ever, have said this cannot carry on. We have put a cap on the average class size.

Will some classes be larger than the cap, than the average? Certainly they will. Some will be larger, some there's one class of 30, there will be another class at 20, so that the average is 25. That's the nature of an average. But I'll tell you that at least we have stopped the growth of the classes. That class which is at 30, without putting a cap on class size, would be 31 and 32 and 33 as the years roll by. That will no longer happen. That was taking place to some degree in the context of negotiations between the boards and the unions. The boards and the unions were negotiating compensation and other aspects and it was resulting in larger class sizes clearly in some instances across Ontario, but we've now put a stop to that.

Tutors in the classroom is an issue we haven't talked about much over the last couple of days, but here is support for our teachers in the classroom, another program of quality. Young people from our colleges and universities who have skills are coming into the classrooms, helping the teachers with computer programs to teach the elementary students, by and large, about computers.

I was at the Andrew Hunter Elementary School in Barrie and they are just so pleased with the program and they have such an excellent program at the Hunter school in Magnificence on the computers. They can create their own Web sites, dial into the Ministry of Education Web sites. They are so proficient with the computer. They could teach us all in this House a good deal. How did the elementary kids arrive at this level? They arrived at this level because the tutors program was there, which was an initiative of this government, I'm pleased to say, a quality initiative. We set up the tutors program. The young people came in from the colleges and the universities and showed the elementary students how to do these things on the computers and now the young kids are just so proficient on the computers. You have to be proud to see them and see how well they operate.

The special education I've mentioned.

Today I was really pleased, and I guess it's the last thing I'll speak to today before I sit down, to specify board by board the monies which will flow to school boards to build new accommodations. We know that in many boards in the province there are more students than there is space to accommodate the students, that there are many portables and that students are not being housed in the most accessible accommodations. This is something that needs to be dealt with.

The formula that we announced earlier this year, details of which I announced this afternoon, will flow monies to the boards. The boards will now be able to rely on a flow of revenues. They will be able to convert that flow of revenues into a capital program. We've given the boards the flexibility. We've said to the boards, "You are responsible entities and we're not going to direct you as previous governments have done." Previous governments have said you have to build a school here or you have to build a school there. We say no, we're not going to do that.

The boards are responsible. They know the needs of their students. They know the needs within the context of the whole board. We'll flow them the money. They will convert that into capital and they will decide, with their parents, with their constituents, with their ratepayers, where to best invest, where to best build new schools, where to best put renovations on existing schools. That's right across the province. It's an unprecedented program. It will involve some \$800 million worth of building over the next year and about \$1.5 billion over the next three years: an unprecedented program in Ontario.

When those schools start to come up, as the one in York region today, Richmond Hill — I was in Richmond Hill this afternoon —

Interjections:

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Order. **Hon David Johnson:** When that school is built, I think we'll all be proud in this House, even those who are heckling me today, those merchants of fear. We'll all be

proud to see those schools crop up and the students having the proper accommodation.

That's another aspect of our quality program, as is Bill 63 to describe the instructional time, to define it. I

challenge the opposition. I say this is part of our quality improvement program in education in Ontario, and I ask you to look at it in that vein and give us your support. We need your support. Go for quality.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 63, An Act to amend the

Education Act with respect to instructional time. The bottom line here is, we're dealing in terms of instructional time for secondary school teachers. Instructional time, in my view, is a teaching condition. Quite frankly, it's a quality teaching condition we're talking about here. Time in the classroom teaching students is certainly time well spent and it's one of the standards that we're trying to maintain.

Last fall, the government, through the Education Quality Improvement Act, which was Bill 160, and the Fewer School Boards Act, introduced reforms to improve the quality of education for all students in Ontario and to ensure consistent province-wide standards. During the implementation of these reforms there has been discussion about the legislative requirement that secondary school teachers provide instruction to pupils which amounts to, on average, four hours and 10 minutes daily.

on average, four hours and 10 minutes daily. In his letter of September 4 to chairs of school boards and school authorities, the Minister of Education and Training reminded them of the new provincial standard-setting and a minimal amount of time that teachers are required to spend teaching. That's what we're talking about here: teaching in the classroom. That's what instructional time is all about.

The minister's letter also discussed the meaning of secondary school instruction and signals his intention to introduce legislation that would confirm this definition for the purposes of section 170.2 of the Education Act. The minimum instruction time standard was adopted by the Legislature last year and is now the law. The proposed instruction time amendment provides confirmation of what has been a commonly understood term: that instructional time is time in classroom teaching students. That's basically common sense. I think it's fairly well understood.

However, that's not what's been going on with respect to the negotiations between school boards and the teachers' unions. The proposed instruction time amendment provides confirmation of what has been a commonly understood term. If passed by the Legislature, it would ensure consistent, province-wide understanding and application of the instruction time standard as we move ahead to enhance the quality of education for students. What we're talking about in terms of instructional time is that the Education Act provision under section 170.2 provides that every school board "shall ensure that, in the aggregate, its classroom teachers...are assigned to provide instruction to pupils for an average of at least 1,300

minutes" per week for elementary schools, which works out to four hours and 20 minutes per day, and 1,250 minutes per week for secondary school teachers, which works out to four hours and 10 minutes per day. I'd have you note the differential between elementary school teachers' time and secondary school teachers' time. There's a significant difference between the two. Yet that's what we're faced with respect to secondary school

The very fact is that it's the responsibility of school boards and unions to negotiate agreements respecting provincial standards. That's their obligation but they have to negotiate with respect to the provincial standards, not water down the provincial standards. Some of those standards are a five-hour instructional day for pupils, 110 hours per credit, limits on class size, prohibition of planned budget deficits, minimum instructional time for teachers and 190 instructional days for secondary students, which includes a maximum of 10 exam days and a maximum of four professional activity days. These are provincial standards that have been set out.

Let's deal with instructional time because that's the focus of this bill. It involves a teacher "assigned in a regular timetable to invigilate examinations or provide instruction" in the following: "a course or program that is eligible for credit... a special education program," a remedial class, an English-as-a-second-language program, "an apprenticeship program... a co-operative education program... any other class, course or program of a kind specified... in a regulation," such as a teacher adviser program.

What we're talking about is a teacher assigned to a regular timetable providing instruction in programs which are obviously to the benefit of the students in terms of their education. It's not dealing with such items as cafeteria supervision; that's not instructional time. Neither is hall monitoring. Instructional time is time in the classroom teaching students. That's the common sense definition, that's the common sense approach of this government with respect to instructional time.

The law was passed last year so that secondary schools

The law was passed last year so that secondary school teachers would spend more time in the classroom. High school teachers in Ontario have been spending less than four hours of their day teaching students, while the national average is 4.5 hours. Let's look at some of those national standards and other jurisdictions in the country in terms of the time that's being spent teaching students in the classroom at the secondary level.

In this province in January 1998 the teaching time

hours per day ranged between three hours and 40 minutes to three hours and 50 minutes per day teaching students. Under this new legislation which was put into place, as of September 1998 in Ontario that has been increased to four hours and 10 minutes. We're increasing by 20 minutes classroom instructional time. Even with that increase, we're the third-lowest in comparison to all the other provinces in this country. The only two provinces that are below us are Quebec and Saskatchewan. All the rest are above us.

I would say to you that we're certainly not at the norm level. We're dealing with essentially trying to bring up what I would call a teaching condition. I think David Cooke, who is the co-chair of the Education Improvement Commission, would characterize instructional time to students in the classroom as a teaching condition, and I would agree with him. I wouldn't view this as a working condition, something you can negotiate with the trade union and water down so they can achieve whatever instructional time you have, the greater the quality of education you're providing; that's increasing and providing quality student time, and that leads to better performance. That's the bottom line.

What are we trying to accomplish here? Are we trying to accomplish providing collective agreements that do not provide for quality teaching time and quality education? That's why the province got involved in providing these standards. But even with what we're providing here under Bill 63, we're well below other provinces in this country. As I said, we're still the third lowest, even by increasing instructional time for secondary school teachers by that additional 20 minutes.

I think it's fundamental. I don't think it takes away from quality education, as do those taking an opposition approach to this, saying: "The less time you're in the classroom, that's going to affect the quality of the teachers being able to teach. It's going to affect quality education, because you're making us teach more in this province out-just don't understand that argument. I'd remind the opposition parties that the parents in this province number the teachers — that's common sense mathematics — so let's focus on who we're trying to benefit here. We're trying to benefit the students and we're trying to make sure that the parents get the value for their dollars with respect to sending their children to school and making sure that as a province we provide quality education and these standards.

That's an unfortunate outcome of what has happened with respect to these negotiations this time around. We're getting caught up into basically fine hairs, the thin edge of the wedge, if you want to put it that way, in terms of instructional time in terms of taking the teachers out of the classroom so you can maintain your staff level? That's the union's objective. That's obvious in terms of what their goals are.

The bottom line is that I don't think it's out of line to increase the teaching time in front of students in the classroom by 20 minutes. That's a basic, common sense approach.

We've had to take this measure as a government to come forth with this legislation because the school boards and the trade unions haven't been able to negotiate that standard which is set out already in the legislation. That's already out there in terms of how much instructional time is required of the secondary school teacher. What they're dicker about is, what is instructional time? We know what instructional time is. It's teaching the students in the classroom their core curriculum. It's not monitoring the lunch period and other matters that take the teacher away from the classroom.

1550

We have to come forth here in this Legislature to define instructional time. That's what we're all about here in terms of dealing with this, and I think it's a fairly common sense approach to deal with it. But that's a fairly unfortunate outcome in terms of the negotiations that have taken place this time. Unfortunately it led to lockouts on behalf of school boards and it led to strike activity on actions of the rotating strikes. That's another unfortunate aspect in terms of the negotiations, rotating strikes, which have obviously affected classroom time, instructional time. But that's what we're trying to do here, to make it very clear that you can't negotiate down a standard, and that's what's happening out there, negotiating down instructional time. We're not in favour of that.

The law is the law and the law has been very clearly set out in terms of the amount of instructional time that is required. We're asking for four hours and 10 minutes a day from secondary school teachers. I don't think that's too much to ask. We come here today and now we're defining what instructional time is to make it crystal clear that what we're talking about is teaching time in the classroom with respect to core subjects.

We're not talking about cafeteria supervision and we're not talking about hall monitoring. We're talking about instructional time, which is time in the classroom teaching students. That's what we've had to come to in terms of this piece of legislation, to obviously add transparency, to add clarity, so both parties know what they're negotiating in terms of what instructional time is. It's unfortunate that we have to do this because I think it's common sense what it's about.

I'm very pleased to have been able to join the debate and I fully support Bill 63, its objectives and what we're trying to accomplish in this province in terms of providing quality education. I focus on and I reiterate that what we're talking about in terms of instructional time is a teaching condition that is to the benefit of our students in this province. These are quality standards, it's quality education and it's going to improve our education system.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on Bill 63, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to instructional time.

In my first minute or so I'd like to first compliment the Minister of Education on his bill yesterday, Bill 62, because in my riding we have the Peterborough Victoria

average has to be the 25 and 22, elementary and secondary school respectively.

We have also laid out that there will be 190 instructional days and that would include some 10 examination days, with a maximum of four P.A. days. In the past there was kind of an unlimited number of P.A. days and P.D. days and there were snow days — of course, you can understand why buses wouldn't go on snow days — so they accumulated. There wasn't a limit on how many examination days. All of the snow days and examination days were taken off the 185 instructional days. I said P.A. days and P.D. days could be over and above the 185, and there would be a limit because July and August of course are not days in the classroom.

We're focusing, with this government, on the student and the classroom and educational development, the real nuts and bolts of what education is all about. That is where we're putting our money.

The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, the public board in my riding, really doesn't seem to have it yet. They don't seem to understand. At the very first board meeting in 1998, back in early January, what was their first decision? To have a new headquarters. They started out at \$3 million. By the time they got around to some of the renovations, it was up to \$4 million. Dear knows where it's at now, because in there I understand there are even some special exercise rooms for the director of education. I would have thought he could have gone to one of the gymnasiums in one of the local schools in Peterborough, but no, they had to have their own little exercise room right in headquarters. It's quite a fancy place, I'm told.

I quote from Phyllis Diller. She once said, "This is in, but fat is where it's at." The same could be said for my local public school board. What we really want them to reduce is the fat in administration. Administration does indeed need to get thinner.

I'm absolutely appalled by the comment that was made by the chair, Judi Armstrong, a many times candidate for the NDP. She said that the labour problems could be solved with more money. Lo and behold, that's how it has been solved for the last 10 years from 1985 to 1995, first by the spending Liberals — spend and borrow — and then by the NDP and their spending policies.

I think we have demonstrated that it's very important that we must focus spending on the classroom, because certainly that is not what has been happening in many of our boards. Spending is up from 1995, some \$14.1 billion to \$14.4 billion today and climbing. We spend more on a per student basis than is spent in any other province except for Quebec.

As you follow some of the actions of school boards, you'd almost think they were opposed to quality education, to standards. Certainly in our board, the pupil-teacher ratio actually increased from 1995 to 1997, something which is absolutely totally unacceptable.

1600

Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board — it's Board number 41 in short. They were locked out and I certainly had a lot of parents phoning, concerned about their children not in school. I think it's rather ironic that in the town of Cobourg we had a brand-new St Mary's school just built, finished, ready to go and, lo and behold, the students were locked out. I think that was very unfortunate.

Yesterday was a beautiful exercise in the democratic process and the party system. There was give and take on both sides. Even the NDP gave and took a little bit. It ended up that the students were the winners. They were the winners in the end at 1:30 last night when we had our final vote. Even though the NDP and the Liberals didn't want to agree with the final bill, it was kind of them to let it go through in one day so our students could get back into school.

We've had complaints in the past in the opposition about bills being too thick and too many pages. I don't think they can complain about Bill 63, since it's all on one piece of paper. I doubt if they're going to complain that this particular bill is too long. However, really, if you analyze it, this bill shouldn't be necessary. Instructional time; I think common sense would prevail and we shouldn't have to be going through this exercise. However, the unions have been trying to negotiate and play games and the end result is we're going to have to define what instructional time is.

Interjection.

Mr Galt: Yes, that's right.

Of course, things that would be recognized in instructional time are a course or a program, special education, remedial class, English as a second language, apprenticeship programs, co-op education programs and "any other class, course or program specified or described in a regulation made under" this clause.

I think this government has gone a long way in looking after students, getting quality education for our students. We've gone to the point where we actually put in Bill 160 that there would be 1,300 minutes per week or four hours and 20 minutes per day for the elementary students. We put in 1,250 minutes per week for the secondary students, working out to four hours and 10 minutes of instructional time per day.

We have even laid out that there will be 110 hours per credit, and we have limited the class size, put a cap on it, however you want to describe it. The end result is that the board average will not go above 22 students in the secondary panel or 25 students in the elementary.

I have parents regularly calling me and saying, "There are 35 in my Johnny's class," or "my Jane's class," or whoever. Another will say there are 40 in their class. I'm saying if there are 40 in your elementary school, then there must be a class of 10 someplace, and maybe you had better look around — where is that class of 10? — and ask the school. Maybe they are playing games with us and maybe there is not a class of 10. Maybe we had better check with the board and see, but the maximum class

that we're putting into textbooks. This is long overdue. Students have textbooks that are outdated, held together by duct tape. That's what the previous governments were prepared to allow our students to go to school with, books held together with duct tape, but no money was set aside for the classroom. They were happy to give it all or give a large portion of it to administration.

This debate is really about instructional time. It's about bringing more to our educational system, the standards that are needed there. What we're really asking for is a standard that is in other provinces across Canada. We're talking about a standard that's already in the elementary panel and we're really trying to bring a standard into the secondary panel. We're asking high school teachers to teach some four hours and 10 minutes per day.

As I look at a graph, this graph indicates that the secondary teaching time in Ontario is under four hours, the only province in Canada where it is under four hours. Saskatchewan is right on four hours. Most of the other provinces fall between four and four and a half. There are actually three provinces — BC, New Brunswick and Manitoba — where they're in excess of four and a half hours per day. We're not asking our teachers to teach any more or have any more instructional time than other teachers across Canada.

It's certainly been a pleasure to address this particular bill and to talk about some of the changes that have occurred. J.F. Kennedy once said, "Progress" is a nice word but change is its motivator and change has its enemies." Some of these changes that we've made have garnered some stiff opposition but these changes are needed. It's going to be to the benefit of our students. They're going to have a better opportunity in school, to ensure that teachers are there for instructional time. This is the kind of bill it's unfortunate that we have to bring forward but it's going to give direction to boards and will be of benefit not only to our students but also to our teachers.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): It sounds like I'm at a used car salesmen's convention, the self-aggrandizement of this. I would remind the members on the government side that the teachers had not rejected the idea of extra time to be in school. The real issue is that this is a way for the government to reduce costs and remove teachers.

When you remove teachers, it's not as simple as the government presents. They talk about adding 25%. One of the issues is, when you take a teacher out of a small school, and all the responsibilities that go with it, there's a ripple effect. The response on the part of a lot of teachers is that they're insulted when there isn't a recognition of the other roles they play in that school. I'm amazed that no member from the government side has yet addressed this in terms of the importance of the relationship and the skills of teachers in helping students, not just in an instructional capacity but in a capacity of counselling, in a capacity of being able to advise, in a capacity of building relation-

some very special challenges, like some of the students they have to deal with. I empathize with some of the difficulties they have in their classrooms, but there are many teachers who indeed want to do a good job. They are well trained. My hat's off to many, if not all, of the teachers in our system who are out there wanting to do the right thing. But they're working in a system that is broken and it's been broken for some time.

Back in June, a retired couple from Colborne — I won't name them because they've been previous Liberal workers — came to me and I thought they were going to give me a problem over education. Instead they were so complimentary about what this government is doing for education. They said we're right on track. What we're doing is the right thing and it's long, long overdue. It could have been done over that last decade, but it wasn't.

Last weekend, I was in Brighton at the Applefest celebration. Some 20,000 to 25,000 people were at that celebration. Several people came up to me and said, "You're on track with education but you really should be getting those Catholic kids back into the separate school system and get on with it." I was at a retirement for the CAO of the Campbellford hospital, Dick Quesnel. An accountant from Trenton told me how we were on the right track and doing the right thing for education. The list goes on.

The many things I was at during the past weekend, from the minor softball awards night in Cobourg to the Drumhead service in Campbellford on Sunday afternoon to the Rosemeath Fair on Sunday morning, the message was consistent about education: This government is indeed on the right track, the right track of recognizing excellence in education by having things like province-wide testing and publishing those results. They're saying that, absolutely, parents should know and parents want to know what is going on with their students and what's happening in the classroom. Without these results and without publishing the testing, the excellence would go unrewarded for both pupils and teachers; poor performance would go undetected and consequently students couldn't be given the extra help.

One of the most basic responsibilities a government has is to ensure that quality education is available to our students. We're there to set meaningful standards for all children. Standards in any organization ensure that there is quality, and education is not any different than any other organization. This government is setting standards that will ensure smaller class sizes, setting standards on report cards. We're testing in grade 3. This is the second year of testing in grade 3 and it's time that we got on with other grades.

We've implemented a new curriculum and teachers are thrilled with this new curriculum. Even those who are on the other side of the political fence are saying how great it is with the elementary curriculum that has been brought in. We've legislated the amount of teacher time in the classroom. That's really where education is at, when the teachers are with the students. We've been focusing our funding on the classroom, things such as the \$100 million

It doesn't just happen in the classroom. It happens in the schoolyard. It happens in the cafeteria, if the school has a cafeteria. It happens in that class or another part of the school, maybe in a lounge or a theatre or an auditorium, if that school happens to have them. That's part of the issue.

But the nub of all of this is another way in which to nickel and dime and try to take money out of education. It will have a qualitative effect. The members well know that the teachers have not rejected the idea of the short period of time you're asking for. It's what it symbolizes and what it means in terms of not respecting the roles that teachers have played historically in contributing to the growth and development of young personalities, along with the instruction that they have to teach.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Algoma.

Mr Wildman: I listened carefully to the comments of the minister and his colleagues in the leadoff to the debate on Bill 63, a bill that the government is using to control and ensure that boards comply with their vision, if that's the right word, of how students should receive their education in the province, a bill that will remove flexibility from boards and make it more and more difficult for them to meet the local needs of their students.

I noticed that one of the members who participated in this intervention in the debate talked a great deal about unions wanting, in his view, to protect the number of positions for teachers. I suppose that's quite true. One of the roles of a union is to protect its members. The thing that he forgets, though, is that the members of a teachers' union are professional teachers who not only care about their own welfare, which of course they do, but also care about the welfare of their students and care about excellence in education.

Why is it that they want to prevent the number of teachers being lowered? That's what this is about. One of the main reasons is because they understand that if there are fewer teachers and more students, that means less contact between individual students and teachers. It means less time for teachers to help students and to ensure that they grasp the concepts they are trying to convey. This government says that they are producing more time for teachers to be with students. In actual fact, it means less time for individual teachers and students to interact.

1610

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to my colleagues the member for Simcoe Centre, the member for Northumberland and the Minister of Education. I particularly want to comment on the member for Northumberland's remarks. The member for Northumberland regularly brings specific examples of concerns and thoughts that he has heard from his constituents on issues, as he has done today with education, so he's certainly a good representative in that regard. I too want to do that. The member did so and so will I.

We sent a constituency survey out to residents in Nepean. I have one I was reading right this afternoon: "Please stay on track and get the education system

changed. Don't cave in to the unions, as our education system is so far behind the reality of living."

Interjection.

Mr Baird: It just came back from a constituent on Brent Avenue. It's right here; the member opposite can come over and see it.

Interjection.

Mr Baird: If the member wants to talk about today's mess, she can come and see the two new high schools they're building in my constituency that the Liberals promised and never delivered. They are going to be opening next month. We're very excited about those two new high schools.

Interjection.

Mr Baird: The Conservative government funded those schools; the member is right.

The member for Northumberland talked about the support for rigorous standards in education, for the highest standards in education. I can tell him that's what constituents in Nepean are telling me: about the importance of curriculum, about the importance of spending every dollar wisely and well in our education system. I certainly agree with that.

The Minister of Education too spoke about the importance of capital planning. That's a tremendously important issue for me in my constituency in Barhaven. The government is building two new high schools there and we're very hopeful that through the announcement earlier today we'll be able to build one more high school in the area and then begin to look at how we can ensure that we're spending the money wisely and well to address the shortage of school places for elementary education.

The Acting Speaker: The member for St Catharines.

Mr Speaker: For the opportunity to respond. What the government is embarking upon is complete central control of education by the bureaucracy and the political elite of the Conservative Party in Toronto and leaving virtually no decisions to the local decision-making process, to elected trustees at the local level.

This is totally contrary to the concept that William Davis, for instance, proposed a number of years ago when he was Minister of Education and ultimately when he became the Premier of this province, when he wanted to work with members of the teaching profession instead of against them. At no time do I remember a battle with teachers in this province which was precipitated by Premier Davis.

What this is all about is reducing the number of teaching positions in Ontario by some 7,500. That was stated in the hallway in the Whitney Block by the present Minister of Education. That is on tape. It is recorded by people that in fact he said that.

What the government has done is created a crisis. It has created instability, it has created disruption, because if you want to place in disregard a public institution, you do exactly that: You create a crisis. You create a lack of confidence in public institutions, as the Premier tried to do last week when he was firing arrows at people involved in

we can't reduce the credit hours, let's just have each teacher teach a few more students and we can still cut teachers and still cut costs."

I want to suggest to you that when we finally see the secondary school curriculum proposals from this government, we are indeed going to see new minimum standards when it comes to curriculum. You know what they've got on the table now? You know their way of cutting dollars now? It's to take what used to be a thousand courses — I guess the government felt that the kind of educational depth and variety that we're offering with a thousand courses was a little too rich for their minimum standard approach. So they've taken those thousand courses and cut them down to 260. That will be the kind of choices the students who are serving as pages here in the House today will have when they get to secondary school. They'll get to choose, over the total course of their secondary school year, from about 260 courses that this government is prepared to offer as part of its minimum standards. I suggest that these are minimal standards indeed.

I would also argue very strongly, as my leader did in question period this afternoon, that it is absolutely hypocritical to talk about any kind of standards, minimal or otherwise, if you don't have some kind of educational stability across our educational system. This government has done everything within its power, deliberately and inadvertently, through the most gross mismanagement any of us have ever seen through all successive governments, to create a state of instability in our educational system.

I think a lot of it is deliberate. I know a lot of it is from sheer mismanagement. They really don't care about what happens on the front lines. They've got an agenda; they've got a public relations message. They do their agenda and they camouflage it with their millions of dollars of advertising to spin the public on what they want the public to believe they are doing. That's really what the government is all about. That's where the mismanagement comes, because they don't care about what happens on the front lines. They just get the agenda out. So I think a lot of the chaos we have is mismanagement.

I also think there is a deliberate strategy. I want to give the government credit. Some of what they do is actually thought through. It's hard for us to tell sometimes how much is thought through and how much is mismanagement; it's kind of a crazy mix. But I want to give them credit that some of what they do is deliberate, and one of the most deliberate things they have done is to do everything in their power to set one group against another, school boards, parents against teachers, public boards against separate boards — you name it.

Interjection

The Acting Speaker: Member for Durham East.

Mrs McLeod: You name it, Mr. Speaker. This government has done everything possible to create a sense of confrontation and divisiveness and alienation within our school system.

As my leader said today, you can't talk about standards, you can't expect to implement your curriculum and

to their plans for secondary schools. This is something the government has had on the burner, on again, off again, for almost the entire length of time they've been in government. They first started out with this plan for curriculum, which they now want us to believe is about improving standards, to cut a year off the high school program. This government is really about cost cutting, which is what this government is really about. They keep talking quality and standards when what they really mean is, "Let's camouflage what is purely and simply a cost-cutting effort."

In the case of the secondary school curriculum, they set out to cut a year off the students' academic secondary school program in order to save some dollars, only they discovered, perhaps to their dismay, that Bette Stephenson, a former Conservative Minister of Education, had already eliminated grade 13. We were now on a credit system and it was going to be a little bit tricky to cut grade 13 out of the secondary school curriculum once again.

They found that they had to start dealing with credits. What was their answer to quality improvement and setting new standards for our secondary schools when it came to their favourite topic, curriculum? Their answer was to reduce the number of credits that students would require. Their answer was to reduce the length of credit hours, reduce the amount of time that students had to spend in class in order to get a secondary school credit. One of those areas was in English. They were going to reduce the numbers of hours that students actually spent taking English courses. This is from the very government that is saying here today, "We are going to improve quality and we're going to improve standards by increasing the amount of time that teachers spend teaching students." I'm going to debate that point shortly.

I want to take you back to where this government started with secondary schools. It started with an intention to reduce the number of credit hours for students so they could save money by cutting teachers who were teaching those credit hours, and they were going to do it, of all places, in the teaching of English. I think if you were to go out there and ask the average Ontarian or the average businessman where they think the government should make its cutbacks, they would not suggest that you cut back the teaching of English. In fact, I think the message the Premier got just before his standing ovation at the chamber of commerce after he dumped all over the education system was that we need to improve the teaching of English.

Indeed, the government heard that message and they've backed off. They've retreated from their intention to cut the number of credit hours and to cut the number of hours students spend taking English courses. They're in a bit of a dilemma now because they haven't actually been able to cut a year out of the high school curriculum because they've got the same number of credits and the same number of credit hours and they didn't know where they were going to find the money they needed to cut the costs by cutting teachers, which is one of the reasons we have this bill in front of us today that is going to cut teachers by increasing the number of students that teachers teach. "If

your testing, if you don't have some stability. That's why Dalton McGuinty has proposed to this government a simple, almost cost-free education stability plan. How do you at least get some stability in the collective bargaining arena, where there is sheer chaos, where yesterday we dealt with back-to-work legislation unpremeditated in its scope, back-to-work legislation that deals with eight boards at once and sends them into the most inane arbitration process that is going to leave us with a hodgepodge of arbitration awards, if any arbitrator can actually come to grips with the situation?

That's what we had yesterday. That's eight boards. That's eight boards of some 164 agreements that have to be reached, where we have about 11 settlements and now yesterday eight arbitrations. The rest are still out there waiting to be settled or waiting to face strike situations or lockout situations or arbitrated awards.

In order to introduce some stability into that climate, Dalton McGuinty said there are a few simple things you can do. He sat down last week to meet with representatives of teacher organizations and representatives of trustee organizations and said, "What could I call on this government to do that would help to get good local settlements so we would have less chaos and less disruption?"

They said: "Well, actually, there are some pretty simple things you could do. You could, first of all, allow some one-year agreements instead of deeming that every agreement is a two-year agreement automatically when many boards don't know what funding this government is going to give them in year two and therefore are hesitant to settle."

They said: "In some boards where we have tremendous enrolment growth, there are space problems. If you were to allow just some phase-in where we simply do not have enough physical classrooms to accommodate the class sizes that the government is settling now as the average across the system — give us a little bit of time to phase those in." That would have allowed some agreements to take place: not at any point to allow larger class sizes — this government is doing enough to allow larger class sizes, even though they talk about capping class size — but to recognize the fact that the government has only belatedly, only today, acknowledged that these wards are going to have some capital needs and are going to have to find some spaces for students. That was something the minister was not even prepared to consider.

As Dalton McGuinty said, for there to be any long-term stability, for there to be any kind of reasonable climate in which there can be equality of education and a standard of expectation for our students, there is going to have to be a review of the funding formula which this government has put in place, because that funding formula is creating inequalities, it is inadequate, it is strangling education in many boards across this province.

Mr. Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa-Rideau): That's what

he said yesterday.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Order, please. Come to order.

Mrs. McLeod: Those are a few simple things which this government could do if it wanted to have stability. I say again, as my leader said today, without stability in education you cannot talk about standards.

Let me come specifically to the standards that are supposed to be addressed in this bill that we have before us today. This bill deals with where teachers will be allowed to spend their 1,250 minutes of instructional time per week. Let's be clear, there is no disagreement about what the law of the land is. There's no disagreement on this side of the House; there's no disagreement among teachers or among trustees. People know what the laws says. We didn't agree with it when it was done, we continue to believe that the government brought in its changes in instructional time for the one basic reason that they still wanted to cut costs by cutting teachers, but we know it is nevertheless the law of Ontario.

What does determining exactly where those 1,250 minutes a week will be spent have to say about quality? What does it have to say about standards? If you're talking about standards, unless you're talking about something truly minimum, then standards have to imply quality. I wonder what kind of quality of teaching time and therefore what kind of quality of learning time, what kind of standards we're going to have if teachers are spending those 1,250 minutes of instructional time devalued by the very government that controls all of the conditions under which they work.

I know this government relies very heavily on the opinion and the expertise of business leaders. I would ask them to go out and speak to any successful business leader in this province, to any business leader who's carried out any kind of restructuring of his or her organization and ask them one simple question: Do you think you can increase the productivity of your organization by dumping all over your employees? You will not find one successful business person who tells you that you can increase your productivity by having demoralized, discouraged, exhausted employees, and yet that's what this government has sought to do to the teachers of this province.

Do they not understand what conditions that creates for teaching in that 1,250 minutes of instructional time, what conditions it creates for students learning? You can't deliver a quality of education without the full participation of the teachers of this province. I don't know why the government doesn't see that as a basic tenet of common sense. We will truly have minimum standards, with this 1,250 minutes of instructional time defined, and nothing more.

If teachers feel they are pushed to the point where all they are prepared to do is the minimum — because we would then lose the hundreds and hundreds of extra hours that teachers put in working with students in what I would call contact time with students, because there is much more to contact time with students than the hours that are actually spent in a classroom. We will lose the hundreds of hours that teachers put in above and beyond those 1,250 minutes of instructional time per week if teachers feel they

are pushed to the point where all that they can do is the minimum that is required. We will certainly have truly minimum standards if we lose extracurricular activities, which I don't believe are a trill. Yet many members of this government seem unwilling to acknowledge the extracurricular program as an integral part of a full

You want to find out from students what they think is valuable? They will tell you the extracurricular program is an important part of a full and rounded secondary school curriculum for them. For some students it is one of the major gains that they have in their secondary school program because it is so relevant to their particular interests and skills and to the development of those

definition of instructional time that we have before us today in this bill, but it's certainly important teacher-student contact time.

The minister said today, as he said yesterday, "This bill doesn't define as instructional time hallway monitoring or lunchroom supervision." He did acknowledge that in the secondary schools of this province it is necessary to have hallway monitoring and lunchroom supervision. He didn't say that he thought somebody other than teachers should be doing it. I didn't hear him suggest that we should bring back some of those teacher assistants who got cut out of every board's budget as one of the first cuts in the funding formula. I didn't hear him say that we should be contracting out hallway monitoring and lunchroom supervision to someone else or to some private company, as they have in the past suggested we should contract out the maintenance of our schools or the secretarial work in our schools. I didn't hear him have any answers at all as to who should even though he said it was necessary. I can only assume that he thinks teachers are going to do that.

If he doesn't think that should be done as part of a teacher's volunteer work during the day, maybe he could suggest to the Premier that when they run the next edition of the clock ad on which they are spending almost \$1 million to demean teachers, they might at least add hallway supervision and lunch hour supervision to the time that's counted on the clock as a part of a teacher's working day, because otherwise you're going to have to find somebody else and pay somebody else to do it. Let's at least be fair. If you don't think that's a part of what a teacher does during their working day, then you're going to have to hire somebody else to do it.

Intervention

Mrs McLeod: Add it to the clock, I say to the member

for Scarborough something on the other side of the room. Add it to the clock. You want to describe a teacher as working four hours and 10 minutes, let's add to the clock the kinds of things that are necessarily done by teachers even if you want to ignore all the things they do on a voluntary basis. Let's at least get some honesty in your millions of dollars worth of advertising. Good luck, when I suggest that might ever be the result of this government's actions.

Maybe the government thinks we should go the American route. Our leader spoke to this last night. There are lots of examples in the United States. Mr. Gilchrist suggests that perhaps we should add extracurricular activities to the definitions that are in instructional time. That would certainly be the American route, I suggest, because that's what happens in the United States. They pay people to come in and do extracurricular activities with students. Is that the route we want to go? Is this really about minimum standards of instructional time for teachers in this province? If this government keeps insisting, with its ticking clock on television, that teachers are doing the minimum amount, which is so far from the truth that it is staggering, not staggering that this government would spend \$1 million on advertising, we've seen that six and 10 times over in the last year, but staggering that any government would so totally misrepresent the reality of a teacher's working day as to suggest they are working four hours and 10 minutes. But if they want truth in advertising and they want to describe a teacher as working four hours and 10 minutes, then maybe they want to go the American route and have somebody else do all those extra things that teachers are doing. That would be minimum standards, again.

This government has from the very beginning — I hope not successfully but they've spent a lot of money in the attempt — attempted to misrepresent the kinds of time that teachers spend with students and how the students of this province benefit from the time that is spent with their teachers. They wanted us to believe that our teachers are spending less time teaching than in other provinces. I think the member for Simcoe Centre suggested that actually there are at least two other provinces where, even by the government's numbers, teachers are spending less time with their students. But I want to emphasize the fact, because I think the government has been quite careful here, they have never said that our teachers are spending less time with individual students. They say they're spending less time teaching classes of students. Even then, they happen to be wrong.

What they've failed to understand in making their comparisons is that Ontario secondary school teachers spend some 50% of what is described as their non-instructional time in on-call time. If they don't have that on-call time, they're not going to be able to step in and cover teachers who are away and that means the boards are going to have to hire substitute teachers, occasional teachers, and they're going to have to pay the occasional teachers. I suggest that that is also a minimum standard, because I don't think you get the same quality of instruction from somebody who does not have the continuity of that regular teacher in the classroom.

1640

The crucial thing to understand is that is what this government's agenda is, to have fewer teachers with more students. That's the goal here. All of the proposals from the government, all of the definitions, mean fewer teachers in the secondary schools. Figure it out. It's pretty easy. If you have fewer teachers, they are going to have more

how the 1,250 minutes is to be implemented and therefore haven't made final staffing decisions about how many teachers could be lost as a result of this government's agenda.

But here's what's happening as we speak. We see the Thames Valley board is 127 teachers down this September; Toronto is 471 down; Durham is 120 teachers down; Kawartha Pine Ridge is 119 teachers down; Peel has 252 fewer secondary school teachers this year; Waterloo is 57. At this point, just by a rough count, there are over 1,500 fewer secondary school teachers in our schools as of September, and this is just the beginning.

The reason I selected those boards is that these are boards in which there are more students, so these aren't teacher job losses that are a result of declining enrolment. These are fewer teachers with more students because of this government's agenda and this government's funding. If I take Thames Valley, for example, they have 127 fewer teachers, but they have 528 more students to teach. How does that give us more teachers and more teaching time with students? If we take Toronto, we see at this point 471 fewer secondary school teachers and 984 more students. We see Durham: 120 fewer secondary school teachers, but they've got 170 more students. We see Kawartha Pine Ridge: 119 fewer secondary school teachers. How many more students? Some 451. Here's the Upper Grand: 27 fewer secondary school teachers, 472 more students. Peel: 252 fewer secondary school teachers, 328 more secondary school students.

It doesn't take a mathematical genius to figure out that if you've got fewer teachers and more students, you're going to have less teacher time with students. That's the beginning of the results, the real results as they affect students and teaching time with students, of this government's agenda.

We know what this government's goal was; they made it so abundantly clear. Well, maybe they didn't intend to make it abundantly clear. Somehow, somebody in the Ottawa Citizen a year ago January got hold of the fact that the government was doing focus groups on how they could cut costs by cutting teachers. There was a banner headline in the Ottawa Citizen in January 1997 that said, "Government Out to Cut 10,000 Jobs." How did they want to cut 10,000 jobs? They wanted to do it by increasing the amount of instructional time that teachers would spend, the amount of classroom time, so that you would have 10,000 fewer teachers teaching more students. They did focus groups. They did a couple in Ottawa; they did a couple in my home riding of Thunder Bay. What did they discover? The public actually thought that if they were going to have 10,000 fewer teachers, it might actually hurt the quality of education for their kids. They said: "We don't like this idea. We don't like the idea of cutting costs by cutting teachers. We don't think you should cut 10,000 teachers." So the government then did elaborate public relations spin so that people would come to believe that our secondary school teachers had less teaching time than anybody else in the country and that it

students. If you have fewer teachers with more students, you cut costs all right, but you also have less time with each student. Anybody who wants to buy the government's line that this is about teachers having more time with students has got to read the fine print. I don't know how you read the fine print in a television ad, because it isn't there, but the fine print is that there will be fewer teachers with more students and they will have less time with each individual student. That's reality. We will have fewer teachers.

Let me give you an example of Dryden High School. It just happens to be one single high school, and I just found out about this the other day. They are going to have 49 teachers teaching 148 classes. By the way, 96 of the 148 will have more than 22 students in them; 22 of those 96 classes are going to have 30 or more students in them. If you figure that out, that means the average teacher in the Dryden High School is going to be teaching about 100 students. I ask people to think about the time it takes for a teacher to adequately prepare for teaching 100 students a day, because that's what that average teacher in the Dryden High School is going to be teaching, 100 individual students a day.

Interjection

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Scarborough East, come to order.

Mrs McLeod: The 100 individual students a day need classroom materials prepared, obviously, but they also have seen 100 students in the course of that day. Those 100 students may well need some individual help outside of those four hours and 10 minutes that the teacher will have in in-classroom time with them, because it's pretty hard to give individual attention to 100 students in the course of a day while you've got them in classes of 30 or more in the case of 22 of those 96 classes in Dryden.

That's the reality of a teacher's day. That's what goes on outside of the four hours and 10 minutes. When you teach 100 students, which is about average in Dryden High School, you've got to have some time outside the four hours and 10 minutes to provide that individual help and that individual attention, as well as do the marking that this government wants teachers to be doing. They want higher standards of evaluation. They want more testing. That means more marking for 100 students a day. The government's agenda is also quite clearly — I come back to it again — to cut costs by cutting teachers. What this is all about at the end of the day is fewer teachers, more students. Fewer teachers — fewer teachers' jobs.

I just want to tell you what is happening currently, because currently — I look at one; I have a note here from John MacDonald, who is a teacher at Eastdale Collegiate in Oshawa. There are 11 fewer teachers in his school. There were 89 teachers last year and this year there are 78, a 15% decrease in this school. I'll tell you what's just happening as we speak, and this is before there had been agreements in all but five secondary schools around teaching loads, or one-year agreements in about 15 other boards, but many boards have not reached agreement on

was OK to have them teach more and that this would actually mean more teaching time with students. Again, I say it was spin that distorted the reality, which is that this government is cutting costs by cutting teachers. It means there will be fewer teachers teaching more students, and that is less time with individual students. The statistics that we're seeing this fall bear that out in spades. When you have fewer teachers and more students, you have less time with individual students.

You also start losing programs and you start losing services. The member for Algoma-Manitoulin, behind me, can tell you what it means in small boards, in small high schools in northern Ontario, in his home community, and in areas near my home community, where if you start cutting school staff by 15%, you start losing the numbers of teachers you've got to the point where you can't offer a full range of credits.

We've got high schools outside the community of Thunder Bay who are saying, "We are not going to be able to graduate students with a high school diploma because we're not going to have enough teachers left to offer enough credits for our kids to get a high school diploma here at home." They may have to start shipping kids into town 200 miles away in order to get a high school diploma. Is that what we talk about when we talk about standards? That is minimum standards indeed. That is taking us back to a time so far earlier than the Bill Davis approach to education and to government that it's hard to imagine any government could want to go that far back in time.

What does this bill actually do to instructional time and to define instructional time? I think it's important to spend a few moments on it, because the minister would like us to believe that the reason he put this bill in with his back-to-work legislation was the lack of clarity about what he meant in terms of instructional time. The minister controls all things, he makes all rules, because he controls all the laws, all the regulations and all the dollars. So he said, "It was important that I clarify how I'm going to allow instructional time to be used, how the 1,250 minutes that is now spelled out as the law of the land, as the minimum amount of time that teachers have to spend in a classroom with students, can actually be used." He brought it in as part of back-to-work legislation yesterday because he somehow seemed to think that might help bring about local settlements earlier.

1650

Quite clearly, that wasn't what they were doing. They wanted to bring in the son of Bill 160, and they thought they could slip it in with their back-to-work legislation, which was so unprecedented anyway that you might as well do a couple of other unprecedented things while you were at it. In any event, it was taken out and we have a separate debate on this issue of instructional time today.

But the central issue still for the minister is that he wants to make sure there is no doubt, no uncertainty at the negotiating table about what he means by the definition of instructional time. After all, if you don't march to the minister's drummer, you are not going to get the dollars to

reason they feel they don't have any choice is not just have teachers teaching more than the 1,250 minutes. The difficulty is that many boards feel they don't have any choice but to have teachers teaching more than 1,250 minutes. The difficulty is that many boards feel they don't have any choice but to

But this bill doesn't necessitate that contracts have off its original intention.

Of schedules is because the government was forced to back have this crazy thing that doesn't actually work in terms to back off that to some degree. One of the reasons we public response to the cuts they were making forced them what is seen as preparation time by at least 50%. The increase the amount of instructional time and to decrease goal was to cut 10,000 teachers. Their goal was to minutes. When they did the focus groups in Ottawa, their government originally wanted to go well beyond 1,250 that is considered to be the minimum standard. The step and actually increase the amount of instructional time But in any event, this legislation does not go the next it is the government thinks should be scheduled.

all be non-semestered so that they can schedule whatever scheduled and that probably will mean the schools have to government dictating instructional time that can't be seem to be doing here in Ontario as we have the you should stumble into accidentally, which is what we once many years ago. I don't think it's the sort of thing semestering versus non-semestering. I was through that again. We can have another debate about the merits of that we're going to have all of our schools non-semestered that through increasing instructional time, is likely to be agenda of cutting costs by cutting teachers, and they do One of the perhaps inadvertent results of the Tories' semestered school.

can't be scheduled. It certainly can't be scheduled in a knew full well that it couldn't be scheduled, and in fact it told, "Oh, it can be scheduled." Nobody said how. We were government thought this could be scheduled. We were repeatedly asked at estimates last year how the My colleague the educational critic for the NDP and I and it's virtually impossible to schedule that.

middle. I think it's probably 6.8 or something like that, it's not six out of eight. It's some sort of something in the schedule it in high schools. It's not seven out of eight, but for staff, for that matter — because you can't actually created something of a problem for school boards, has of the province, 1,250 minutes of instructional time, has the law in Bill 160, what is the law

The problem is that what's in Bill 160, what is the law classes out of eight.

This bill does not say every teacher has to teach seven give you seven classes out of eight as your teaching load. Tory government, is less than the teaching time that would which is the law of Ontario thanks to Mike Harris and the it, but I think we've got to recognize that 1,250 minutes, must be teaching seven classes out of eight. This gets this bill before us today does not dictate that every teacher So he has defined it, and I want to make it clear that definition of instructional time.

hire the staff you've put into your contract, so you've got to be sensitive to what the minister is saying about the

because of the scheduling problems, but because of what they are forced to do by the limitations of the funding formula.

We've called for an independent review of the funding formula.

We believe that's absolutely essential to there being any kind of quality of education in our schools, any kind of equity and any kind of stability, to review this funding formula that the government now controls 100%.

Right now, there are enormous inconsistencies between what is required in terms of the 1,250 minutes of instructional time and what this government is doing through its funding formula. There are huge areas of underfunding that aren't related specifically to instructional time and the hiring of teaching staff, but they all put pressures on school boards. It may seem totally unrelated that this government has strangled the maintenance funding, that they've arbitrarily cut the dollars for heating, lighting, and cleaning school space. They've done it to the tune of millions and millions of dollars that school boards are going to be short just to heat, clean and light their schools.

That might not seem to be related to how you hire enough teachers to teach, but it is, because it's all part of the school boards' funding dilemma that this government has forced on them. Boards are feeling that they may have no choice but to go beyond the 1,250 minutes which the government's clock defines as the teaching day.

I want to also acknowledge that what this bill does not do is rigidly describe as instructional time only those hours that are spent teaching academic credit. It is broader than that, and I'm appreciative of the fact that it's somewhat broader than that. It does include teaching the special education program, a remedial class. The minister today spoke about how proud he was of special education in the province of Ontario, so maybe that's one of the reasons they wanted to be sure that remedial classes were included in their definition of what might be considered to be productive teacher-student contact time.

I have difficulty with the minister taking pride in what's happening with special education when I look at what the funding has done to force boards to cut all of the support that's given to special-needs students, whether it is psychologists or social workers, or whether it is teaching assistants who provide supports for special-needs students, or whether it's the fact that the very funding which is supposed to be going to special-needs students is in the mail, according to the minister. It's certainly not in the hands of school boards so they can hire people to provide support for special-needs students.

The minister says: "Don't worry about special ed. We are going to allow teachers to teach remedial classes." Well, fortunately they are — if boards can afford to actually provide remedial classes, which is another question — but that does not speak to the challenges of the teacher who has 22, in rare cases, but more likely 25, 28, 30 or sometimes more than 30, 35 students in a class, and within that 30 students there may well be two or four or eight students with special needs, and no teaching assistants.

I turn that into secondary schools. We talk about classes that can be 25 or 30 or more students, with special-needs students in those classes. Remember that the average teacher is teaching a hundred students a day, with special needs as part of those hundred. These aren't the kids in remedial classes; these are the special-needs students whom we all want to see mainstreamed in our regular classes. Right now they're there without support. I say that the challenge for a secondary school teacher is to be able to provide the kind of individual support to all of the hundred students, with special needs or without special needs.

They can't do that and they don't do that with only four hours and 10 minutes of instructional time. They do that through all the other contact time a teacher has with those students and through all the other work they do that has a bearing on the quality of education that those hundred students receive.

What's left out of the definition is really what I'm talking about here, because what's left out of the definition, which includes a remedial class, which includes English-as-a-second-language for boards that are able to provide some measure of English-as-a-second-language — on another day, with more time, we'll start to go into the details of how much English-as-a-second-language government has placed on funding. But at least it's recognized as instructional time. Apprenticeship is recognized. Co-op education is recognized.

What's left out is the time that's spent with the learning-disabled child or the special-needs child, the time that's spent in tutorials giving extra help. The minister today talked about his pride in the tutors in the classroom — great program, good experience for the students who come in as tutors in the classroom. But it does not replace the time that a professional teacher spends in tutorial help with individual students who need some extra help. That's part of a teacher's day. It's not in the four-hour-and-10-minute clock that's running on television, but it is part of a teacher's day, and it's left out of the definition.

1700

Preparation of materials is left out. The time that is spent with special projects for gifted students isn't in the definition. The time that's spent communicating to parents is not in the definition of instructional time. How many hours added to the teacher's day would be included in the definition of instructional time if things like tutorials or support for learning-disabled kids or preparation of

materials or the disciplining of students or the evaluation of students were included in the definition of instructional time? Well beyond four hours and 10 minutes and, I say to the members opposite, well beyond a standard eight-hour day.

The other difficulty with the legislation, because it was supposed to clarify beyond any shadow of a doubt — and I quote the minister — what he means by instructional time, is that it leaves the barn door pretty wide open for the minister to just jump in whenever the minister chooses to. Subsection (13) says:

“(13) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations,

“(a) specifying or describing classes, courses or programs for the purposes of clause (11)(g); and
“(b) clarifying the meaning of any word or expression used in subsection (11) or (12).”

Basically, this is the minister's first stab at clarifying what he means by instructional time. He can step in at any point in the future, at any time, and if the boards and the teachers are not getting agreements that march to his direction and the funding limitations he wants to impose, he will redefine and reclarify what he means by instructional time, because come hell or high water, this government is not planning to increase the funding and they are going to make sure that the teacher cuts get made so that the funding restrictions can be met. If you have any doubt about that, just look at the restrictions that were put on arbitrators in those eight boards that are going to arbitration over the course of the next month.

We have had settlements to date. I stress again that teachers and trustees have accepted the fact, whether they agree with it or not, that 1,250 minutes of what the minister defines as instructional time is the law of the province of Ontario. Nobody is arguing that now; it is fact. There are some agreements that have been reached that trustees and teachers believe work in the interests of students and meet the letter of the law with 1,250 minutes of instructional time. There aren't a lot of them. I think by last count there are only five secondary school agreements that are actually two-year agreements. There are, I think, about 15 one-year protocols. They can't be called agreements because the government deems that any agreement must necessarily be a two-year agreement.

But these are boards and teachers who have tried to find some way of making the 1,250 minutes work in a way that they feel really does meet the concerns for quality of education for students. Those agreements have defined the meaning of instructional time at least as broadly as this legislation does and in some cases perhaps more broadly. I think we would see more and more local agreements that incorporate the 1,250 minutes, that make it work successfully, if it weren't for this open-ended hammer the minister has placed in this legislation, because as long as boards know that the Minister of Education can come in at any moment and redefine instructional time and change the funding to fit his definition of instructional time, there may be a lot of hesitation to actually reach local agreements.

I see what's happening in my home board of the Lakehead, where the funding restraints are so significant that the teachers are indeed teaching the seven classes out of eight. I see what new teachers are experiencing who are teaching four classes a day with 100 students. I see the exhaustion that they're experiencing. I see what's happened to extracurricular activities and I say to you it is not a work-to-rule measure as much as it is a reality of what happens when teachers have to add on top of four classes and 100 students a day all of those extra things that are a necessary part of a teacher's day, from lunchroom supervision to hallway monitoring to parent communication.

The reality is that if you're teaching four classes a day and 100 students and doing all of those other things which must be done, there's just not a lot of time or energy left over to do the voluntary extracurricular work in the evening. I hope that those kinds of conditions are not conditions because of this government's funding limitations. I hope that before very long this government will understand that an independent, objective review of its funding is absolutely essential, again, if there is to be any equality or any quality or any stability. Until that happens, we are going to have minimum standards created because we have funding at the lowest denominator.

I am rapidly running out of time. The minister wants to talk about their increase in funding in order to talk about the fact that somehow their funding is supporting a higher standard or a higher quality of education. It's important to recognize that we're going to have fewer teachers with more students, not just in each individual school but across the system.

I hope that's not the case. I hope that boards don't feel as though they're either going to have to wait for the second shoe to fall, because the minister did send out a letter saying he was going to get to his goal of increased instructional time and teacher job losses in two steps — I hope the boards aren't waiting for the second shoe to fall. I hope they're not just hoping that an arbitrator will be sent in, as we have more and more back-to-work legislation, so that the arbitrator will take the responsibility for making decisions about how they can meet the government's regulations and not run into a deficit situation.

I hope that boards will realize that these arbitrators are going to start coming into their school systems and they're going to be given the power and the responsibility to essentially micromanage the school system, because how else does an arbitrator make an award that guarantees that the board is not going to run into a deficit situation? I hope trustees will say, “We don't want somebody coming in and micromanaging virtually every aspect of our board in order to come up with an arbitrator's settlement award.”

What I do know is that if it goes the route of arbitration in board after board, we are going to have a crazy quilt of hodgepodge arbitration awards and we are going to have teachers teaching under very different conditions and students learning under very different conditions.

I have read you the statistics of what's happening this fall, of how many places have fewer teachers while they have many more students. If we have fewer teachers with more students, we also have fewer dollars per student now than we had in 1997-98. We're going to have decreasing funding per student in 1999, 2000 and 2002. That what the government's stable funding means. When the Tories talk about no cuts, what they really mean is the same dollars for 25,000 more students per year. It doesn't take a mathematical genius to figure it out. There's going to be less funding per student in each of the next three years. The funding restrictions are going to get tighter and tighter, and I would argue that is because we are going down to the lowest common denominator in the kind of standards that this government wants to talk about.

Let me just give you one figure, because I don't want to drown, particularly in these last few minutes, in figures. Based on the report that was done for the previous Minister of Education, John Snobelen, by Ernst and Young, an independent consulting firm, the dollars that were being spent in 1995 were \$6,032 per student. When this government completes its three-year period of so-called stable funding, the dollars per student will be \$5,371, a decrease of some \$600 per student, which makes a significant difference in boards' budgets, particularly those boards that have large increasing enrolment. They are going to have fewer dollars per student, which means of course that they are not going to have anything other than fewer teachers for the numbers of students they have.

I know that my colleagues have spoken about how we got here. Why are we in a situation that can only be described as total chaos, whether we're talking about collegial bargaining, whether we're talking about the agency of the funding decisions the boards are having to make because of the underfunding that's built into this government's funding formula, whether we're talking about the school closures that we are going to see by the hundreds?

I was part of a school board for some 17 years. I was part of closing some 12 schools over that 17 years. Every one of those decisions was a difficult decision. We made it because of declining enrolment. We made it because we thought it was responsible. I can't conceive of a situation where school trustees are going to have to close literally hundreds of schools.

In the case of the Toronto board, that board alone is going to have to look at closing over 100 schools, not because of declining enrolment but because the government has arbitrarily decided that we have surplus school space, even though there are students in the space, and because they've arbitrarily cut the funding for those school spaces. So the boards have to look at this massive school closure.

1710

How did we get to this situation of chaos? We can't go all the way back and I don't have time to give a full chronology of the crisis that we're facing in Ontario education right now, but we can certainly go back to what

unprecedented. Where is it all going? I believe, whether it is deliberate, whether it is some mix of deliberate agenda and sheer mismanagement because they don't care about anything other than cutting costs and creating a public relations spin

As the government continues with that agenda, we have a situation which is unprecedented in terms of what it has done to create not a quality learning environment for students but a negative learning environment for students. We have had a government that has imposed its agenda through legislation, which not only has not involved consultation, but which has gone directly against every piece of advice that has been given to this government, not just by teachers, not just by trustees whom they would dismiss as special-interest groups, but indeed by parents and students right across the province. That was true on Bill 104 where they amalgamated all the school boards whether they needed to be amalgamated or not, whether they were going to save \$150 million or whether it was going to cost \$300 million as the school boards said it would. We saw it in Bill 160, which was rammed through as an omnibus bill on education because it was part of this teachers' basic agenda of cutting costs by cutting teachers and therefore they had to take control of the dollars. We have seen this government impose its agenda for change in a dictatorial and bullying way which is also

Bankrupting the system is what we have seen this government steadily intent on from the time it came into office. I don't know whether Mike Harris conceptually believes in the process of bankrupting a system to bring about transformational change or whether he would articulate that in the same way Mr Snobelen did, but I know he supported the changes that were introduced by the previous Minister of Education, that his government supported those changes and that the current Minister of Education continues with those changes and is supported by his government.

They have brought us to a state of crisis beyond anything John Snobelen could possibly have imagined in his most ideal vision of bankrupting a system so you could bring in transformational change, which by any other words means the government imposing its agenda, and as this government has gone on unsuccessfully for three years the system so that it attempts to wash its hands of any responsibility for actual management of the system even though it controls all of the dollars and makes all of the

think was clearly articulated by the previous Minister of Education who said that they were going to have to create a crisis. People made a joke of that, but it wasn't a joke. It wasn't an inadvertent top-of-the-head comment. It was a very carefully articulated philosophy of the management of change on the part of the previous Minister of Education. He believed that the only way you could overcome resistance to change was to bankrupt the system. When you had bankrupted the system, then you would have the kind of clear slate on which you could

to camouflage the cost-cutting agenda, some crazy mix of that, whatever, what this government is doing is setting the public education system up for failure. They are certainly setting school boards up to fail. If they can't manage the system without going into a deficit, the minister will exercise his powers and come in and take them over. If they manage their boards without a deficit, then they are going to have to do what Justice Cumming says: "They're going to have to in many cases cannibalize the rest of the education system just to meet this government's funding controls."

If they can't get agreements because there's no local flexibility to reach local agreements, is the government going to go to provincial bargaining? Maybe for a very brief transitional time. But this government doesn't want the responsibility of actually managing a system, actually negotiating agreements with the province's teachers. They wouldn't hold that responsibility for two seconds. They would simply use that as an excuse to hand the responsibility for management over to parent councils, which is also something they have wanted to do from the very outset and backed off only because of the universal rejection of that concept by the people who sit on parent councils in schools across the province.

I don't know how much of this is part of the grand design, setting the system up for failure, and how much of it is just a convenient fallback position that if the system fails they can allow for charter schools and voucher systems and privatization. Either way, whether it's part of a grand design or just a convenient fallback position, we are heading, at a rate that disturbs me profoundly, towards the loss of public education in Ontario.

We're not very good at talking about what we value in public education. We are wonderful critics. Everyone is a critic of public education. Everybody has been through it. Who knows better than somebody who has been through it what's wrong with public education? We are all good critics of the public education system. We are not very good at talking about its strengths. Like so many things we value as Canadians, we tend to take it for granted, and things that we take for granted, we don't spend a lot of time talking about what it does well.

This government has made a three-year commitment to not talking about the strengths, to misrepresenting the strengths and the achievements of our students as well of our teachers. That's part of their grand design without any doubt at all, to convince the public that the system is broken so that the public will accept the changes that you are bringing as necessary to fix the system. What does this government talk about except moving money out of administration into the classroom? The Premier talked about that at the chamber of commerce, even though he now controls the funding and has decided how much should be in administration and how much should be in the classroom.

They're trying to convince the public: "We'll just fix much money and not giving us value. We'll improve the value part and just fix the parts that are broken." What

that really means is, "We can cut the costs." This government is trying to persuade the public that the public education system is broken and of no value, and they are paving the ground for the loss of public education as we know it.

We have not been good at valuing the strengths of our system, but we had better understand why we value public education in this province. We had better understand why it's threatened and what we stand to lose, because if we lose it, we'll never get it back.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Wildman: I'd like to congratulate my friend from Fort William on her presentation on this legislation. It was an excellent examination of the motives of this government, as well as what is actually in the legislation.

I think it was significant that she talked about minimum standards and what that means in terms of the quality of education for students in Ontario, because this government is more interested in minima than it is in maxima in terms of the quality of education for students in Ontario. Also I think she made it very clear that the purpose of this legislation, the purpose of Bill 160 and the funding formula — or the defunding formula — is to ensure that there are fewer teachers on staff in Ontario. That's the purpose.

Some might say, "Okay, maybe we don't need that many teachers," but the point is, if this government is going to lower the number of teaching personnel in the province, then they should be quite frank about it and say that is their purpose, that is their design, rather than trying to camouflage that motive in the rhetoric of excellence in education, in the rhetoric of more contact between students and teachers, because it's simple mathematics that if you have significantly fewer teachers and more students in Ontario, there is going to be less time, less contact between individual teachers and students.

The government should be up front and simply say they're trying to cut teachers to save money and they're not interested in quality education.

1720

Mr. Bruce Smith (Middlesex): I want to say at the outset that I have had the pleasure of spending a great deal of time across the table on educational issues with the member for Fort William, and I have to re-emphasize to her today, and to others, that there is no grand design to dismantle the education system in this province. It's not about establishing minimum standards; it's about establishing new standards in curriculum, new standards and province-wide testing. The evidence is there, it's before the people of this province, so quite to the contrary, I have to admit that I am somewhat surprised at the negative perspective the member brings consistently to the debate on education. I have to think in part that it's reflective of her frustration with the fact that the Liberal Party in this province has no educational policy whatsoever. She's frustrated by that perspective, and in that context, in the absence of any meaningful policy, the member's quite satisfied in relying on the status quo and keeping things the way they are with respect to education.

Much has been said about teacher positions and the first government to take specific action on class size, putting it into statute. Not only did we put it into statute, but we've placed the financial tools that are necessary to deliver on that in the form of some \$1.2 billion, and \$1.2 billion equals 3,000 new teaching positions in this province. When I look at the Durham board, for example, their projected teaching positions, some 40 original notices were given for layoffs. All have been recalled and the projected teacher hiring equates to some 200 new positions. So it's not about eliminating teacher positions in this province. It's about including them in a renewed and rejuvenated public education system where their contribution and participation is very meaningful to this government.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): We've just heard from the previous speaker the propaganda as to what current government policy is supposed to be. I have in my hand today's Pembroke paper which tells it as it is from the point of view of front-line teachers in Ontario in an area that's supposed to be advantaged by the current government's policy.

What have I got? Today's Pembroke Observer quoting the director of education for the Renfrew county board saying that the problem they now face is that in fact in terms of classroom resources, the new funding formula is about reductions, not about improvements. That's Renfrew county. We're supposed to be better off. That's not Conway talking. That's the director for the Renfrew County District School Board.

Perhaps even more importantly I have in my hands today a letter by a special-ed teacher by the name of Alice Roy from Pembroke. She writes an open letter to Dave Johnson, Minister of Education. I don't have time to read the whole letter, but this is from a special-ed teacher who says the following, and I quote:

"I am a special education teacher in a large high school. My job is to ensure that the students with special needs have every opportunity to get the best education possible. Our school has 94 learning exceptional students who have been identified as needing special supports or programs. I work with students in wheelchairs, autistic students, learning-impaired students, students with cerebral palsy, developmental delays, learning disabilities and behavioural problems. Some of my students" — says "require this teacher in the Pembroke area, Alice Roy — "require work closely with" others in providing these needs.

She goes on in the letter to say she had hoped and she had believed that the new funding formula, courtesy of Mr Johnson and Mr Harris, would make things better. She reports today to the people in Pembroke and area that in fact the formula is not helping, it's hurting.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Conway: That's the reality —

The Deputy Speaker: Further questions and comments? The member for Lake Nipigon.

Mr Pouliot: One more time we've been the beneficiaries, the recipients of the most articulate and factual description, complete rendition, of where we're at at the present time, by the former Leader of the Opposition, who also spent seven years as an educator in a supervisory capacity as chairperson of the board. So yes, the critic member, the former leader of the party, knows what she is talking about and we should pay attention.

She warns the government about what is happening, putting the children into jeopardy because this government, let it be known, does not like teachers. We don't know to this day whether it's a flaw with the Premier —

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [children's issues]): We do like teachers. We not only like teachers, we think we have the best teachers in this province, in this country.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Member for Mississauga South, come to order.

Mr Pouliot: — that when the Premier was a teacher for a few weeks or months, the personality of the Premier did not suit education. To this day, recall, Madame —

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Qu'est-ce que c'est? Je ne comprends pas.

Mr Pouliot: I have no lesson to take from you, so please, kindly be quiet.

Back to education. He's declared war on teachers. Who is paying the price? The future of the province, the pages who are attending the education system, the hundreds of thousands of students in Ontario. In fact, over two million are left carrying the guilt because the Premier does not like education, does not like professions. The Premier preaches double standards. We have a chaotic situation that the Premier and this cabinet have concocted.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Fort William.

Mrs McLeod: I am intrigued that the member for Middlesex, who is the parliamentary assistant for education, assures us that there is no grand design that has led to the chaos which education is experiencing right now. I thought I was actually giving the government a degree of credit for at least a Machiavellian capability in suggesting there was some measure of grand design in where all this is leading, because the only other conclusion is that all of this chaos is a result of deliberate or inadvertent mismanagement of education, and that is incredibly irresponsible on the part of any government.

My frustration — the member for Middlesex has touched on my frustration — is real. It is the frustration, as I've said in this House many times before, of somebody who actually is committed to public education and determined to defend it. It is a frustration that I have as a member of this Legislature, as well as somebody who has been involved in education for some 30 years, with a any concern at all for the impact of that agenda on students across this province. My frustration is with a government that is able, with blindfolds on —

Mr Baird: You are the only one who has concern. No one has concern but you.

Mrs McLeod: — with absolute, fixed blindfolds, to pursue its propaganda line, as my colleague from Renfrew North has described it. My frustration is with — maybe it's amazement —

Mr Baird: You are amazing.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Nepean, come to order.

Mrs McLeod: — with government members who are able to sustain their ability to ignore the impact of what they are doing on students and on classrooms, in spite of the fact that the evidence of that is before them in every school in their riding if they choose to see or to look or to hear what is actually happening.

Justice Cumming said it all when it came down to the core of what this government has done, its control of funding: that it brought in the funding formula without taking time to look at the impact of the funding formula on education, because this government doesn't care about the impact. There is no grand design; I accept that. This government has had one goal from the beginning, to cut costs, and they don't care how students get hurt.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Wildman: I rise to participate in this debate on

Bill 63, the son of Bill 62, which is here before us because my leader yesterday in the Legislature, in expressing our complete and serious disagreement with Bill 62, indicated that as an opposition party we would be prepared to allow for debate of Bill 62 yesterday if the government were prepared to sever the bill, that is, divide out some of those parts of the bill that we found particularly objectionable and detrimental to the quality of education in Ontario and those parts of the bill on which we felt we needed to have the opportunity for full debate to bring before the House the concerns that we have as representatives of our constituents and the people of Ontario about the government's direction in education, particularly as it relates to Bill 160.

The government wasn't willing to sever as much from Bill 62 as we desired, to be frank. We felt that there were portions of Bill 62 beyond what the government was prepared to sever which did not need to be passed quickly, even in terms of the government's view of the situation in education. Those portions of the bill dealt with the fettering of the arbitration process in Ontario, the setting of constraints that arbitrators would have to adhere to in making decisions around awards related to collective bargaining between teachers, the federations and boards in Ontario.

These constraints are most onerous. They're very narrow. They perhaps don't sound unreasonable to some one not particularly interested or knowledgeable in collective bargaining, but simply by setting a requirement that the arbitrator take into account ability to pay, the government was enforcing its centralization over the budget.

We know that in Bill 160 the government took complete control of education budgets away from the locally elected boards. Of course they've amalgamated boards and made them much larger and less local than

they used to be, less accountable to their electors, less accountable to the ratepayers, to the parents and to the students. But what has really harmed the role of trustees is this government's taking control of the purse strings to the point of saying that boards could no longer have any discretion to raise any funds locally and would be completely dependent on the provincial government, on the Minister of Education and Training and the Minister of Finance, to determine how much money they would have to be able to provide education for the students of Ontario. The boards find themselves now in a very difficult position. They have to administer a budget over which they have absolutely no control, and if that budget is inadequate, if the revenue is inadequate for ensuring quality education in Ontario, the boards can't do anything about it. There's absolutely nothing they can do about it. I hear members across the way when someone raises questions about special education, as my friend from Renfrew North just did. His friend from Lanark-Renfrew said, "Talk to the trustee." Frankly, you can go and talk to the trustee, but what good is that going to do? The trustee will say, "We're doing the best we can with the money the government has given us, and we don't have enough money to ensure quality special education for the students of Pembroke."

What will the trustee say to the teacher who wrote and who was quoted? I suppose the trustee will say, "I guess you'd better go and talk to your MPP, who can raise it in the Legislature with the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance, because they're the ones who determine how much money we have for special education in Pembroke."

What does this mean for the arbitration process? The arbitrators have to take into account the ability to pay. Of course the board's ability to pay under this new regime is determined by the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Education and Training, so on the one end the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Education and Training, the provincial government, is determining how much money or how little money the boards have, and at the same time they're saying arbitrators will have to take into account ability to pay in making awards.

They are controlling things at both ends of the process and making it impossible for boards to protect quality education and meet the needs of special education students in Pembroke.

We would have liked to have had the government prepared to compromise more than they did yesterday. We would have liked to have seen them take those provisions on the arbitration, which don't have to come into effect, according to the government's own legislation, for 30 days, take them out of the bill and debate them at greater length in this Legislature because of their implications for the quality of education for students in Ontario and for the collective bargaining process.

What's even more bizarre is the requirement under the arbitration process this government has brought in that the arbitrators have to be able to provide a plan to the provincial government indicating how the board is going

to be able to meet its requirement not to have a deficit if there is any increase in the expenditures as a result of collective bargaining.

This, to my knowledge, is quite unique and I don't think this has ever happened in any process involving mediation or arbitration in the province. Never have arbitrators been required to draw up a budget for the management to implement. There's just never been a requirement.

We wanted to have further debate on that. We wanted to be able to debate it at greater length, but the government said no. The government said they had to have the provisions, the terms and conditions for arbitration as part of their bill that would order teachers back to work, back into the schools, and order the reopening of the schools.

Just as an aside, I think it bizarre that in areas where there were lockouts the boards seemed to have decided that they needed to be ordered to reopen the schools. Surely, if the chair of the Toronto Catholic board wanted to have the schools open and the teachers back in the schools, all he had to do and all the board had to do was to reopen the schools. They didn't need any legislation. All they needed was a good key that would fit the lock.

The reason, of course, that they wanted legislation is not because they couldn't open the schools without legislation, but because they didn't want to negotiate. They didn't want to negotiate with their teachers and they were waiting for back-to-work legislation.

I don't agree with that approach, but I understand it because, frankly the reason they didn't want to negotiate was because they didn't have any money. They didn't have enough money to deal with the issues and ensure quality education and deal with the concerns of the teachers in the collective bargaining process, so they were waiting for the government to order everybody back to work.

We wanted to debate those things at greater length. The government refused to take that portion out, but the government did offer, in response to my leader's suggestion, to take out what was part II of Bill 62. Part II had absolutely nothing to do with the so-called crisis that the government was trying to respond to yesterday. It dealt with what the government now calls minimum standards for classroom instruction. This is an amendment to the Education Act which goes far beyond the immediate situation related to the work stoppages and the disruptions. As I proceed with my discussion of this, I hope to be able to demonstrate that if this bill passes, it will probably exacerbate the situation in those areas where collective agreements have not yet been signed beyond the eight boards where there were disruptions that the legislation yesterday dealt with.

I am informed that in the Algoma District School Board, for instance, in my own area, the public board, the members of OSSSTF are going on a rotating strike tomorrow because they haven't been able to negotiate an agreement with their board. They are trying to put pressure to try and bring about some movement on the part of the board. With this legislation that was introduced

1740

This problem is going to continue because the problem does not really originate with the boards or with the teachers. The problem originates with the agenda of the Conservative government. The government has set a funding formula which is inadequate to ensure quality education in the province, a funding formula that means there must be fewer teachers. The government has centralized control over education, has taken away local control and centralized it in the Mowat Block, centralized it in the hands of the Minister of Education and Training and the Minister of Finance, and the government has taken away any flexibility that local boards might have to help negotiate agreements with their teachers. This is a government that seems to think bigger is better and centralization is the best thing there could be.

This bill that we have before us, Bill 63, this son of Bill 62, is in fact going to make the situation worse, because what this bill does is ensure even greater centralization of control over education and the organization of our schools, our education system, here in Queen's Park at the Mowat Block.

This is not a bill that's about education per se. It's certainly not about quality education. This is a bill that is about control, power, about determining who can say or have a say in how the schools are organized and how they're run. What it says is, the Minister of Education will always been responsible for education in Ontario and has always had some say, some control, but so have other actors in the process, so have other participants in the education system. The locally elected trustees have had some control and accountability for quality education in the province. The administrators in the local boards have had some control and say in how the boards are to organize the schools and run the education system.

The teachers, the professionals who are responsible for ensuring quality education, had some say. In many cases, they exercised their role through negotiations with their local boards. They negotiated things that related to the quality of education, the size of classes, the number of teachers, the number of students, the number of hours of instruction. Those things were negotiated. It was a shared responsibility, a shared power for ensuring quality education.

What this government has done has ended that sharing and has concentrated control in the hands of the minister here at Queen's Park. In doing so, they have produced a situation that, as such, local boards cannot meet their obligations. Students are going to suffer, the quality of education is going to be hurt, and frankly the minister,

because of what he has sown, is going to reap the whirlwind. He's doing it now. Unfortunately, he and the government are not going to be the only ones who have to pay for their mistakes. I hope they are mistakes, I hope it wasn't by design that they've done this, because students are going to suffer. Families and communities are going to suffer as a result.

I said that boards have less flexibility. Obviously this bill is about ensuring almost no flexibility. It determines how boards and teachers will negotiate around the issue of instructional time and what the instructional day should be, what instruction is.

Many participants in the debate have tried to argue that this is really an argument only about 25 minutes a day additional instructional time. That is a very simplistic interpretation of what is happening in Ontario in education today. Keep in mind that because of this government's legislation, all of the collective agreements that were in place involving teachers and boards in Ontario were null and void at the end of August, just before school was supposed to start. That in itself is an example of the centralization, the lack of flexibility and, frankly, the stupidity of this government. Why on earth would you have all the contracts, involving every school, every teacher and every student in Ontario, come due at the same time? No wonder you've got a lot of problems on your hands. The government insisted that the contracts that would be negotiated would be for two years.

If the teachers and the boards can't reach an agreement, the only options they have are for the boards to lock out the teachers or for the teachers to strike. The government will say: "No, no, they can keep negotiating. The boards' and the teachers' negotiators can keep negotiating at the bargaining table while they teach." All that means is that the problem will go on and on without resolution. Certainly the students will be in the schools and they'll be benefiting from instruction, but the difficulty of ensuring proper organization of the school and good quality education in the province will not be resolved. It will simply go on.

I said it's a simplistic argument to say that there's only 25 minutes more per day and that's all this argument is about. It is true that the government is insisting on 1,250 minutes of instruction per week and that adds up to, as the government has so often said, four hours and 10 minutes per day. That of course, ignores the fact that any good teacher who cares about excellence in education, who cares about students, doesn't just work when she or he is in the classroom instructing students directly. Any teacher who is worth her or his salt is going to be doing a lot of work in preparation for those classroom periods, is going to be doing research, is going to be analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of individual students in the class, is going to be determining what their needs are, is going to be trying to figure out ways to meet those needs, is going to be discussing with other professionals, other teachers, other members of the staff how they can meet those needs, if

I'll admit there are some teachers who don't do those things, or only do some of them and don't do others, or are not as diligent as they might be. But I can tell you that those kinds of teachers, those kinds of people, do not last very long in the profession. They find other professions for which they are better adapted. Some of them —

Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): Where do they go?

Mr Wildman: The member said, "Where do they go?" and I just thought, there was a teacher in North Bay who taught for two years, who didn't get along, didn't like it very much and he went somewhere else. I think he became a golf pro. If the member wonders where they go, there's an example for you.

The fact is that teachers generally care about their students. Why on earth would you be in teaching if you didn't care about students? It would be a terrible life to lead if you didn't like children and you didn't care about their progress. How on earth would you be able to survive in the teaching profession? I honestly don't know. I've never met a teacher who wasn't a genuinely caring person who wanted to help students.

1750

Most people would say: "Why not 25 minutes more per day of instructional time with students? What are the teachers concerned about?" First off, I've indicated there are a lot of these other things teachers do that they must do if they are to help students to achieve, to meet their potential, that are done outside of the classroom, outside of the instructional time. Teachers give extra help to students. That's instruction, but under this definition it's not instructional time. This definition lacks flexibility.

It's not about 25 minutes and I'll explain that. Right now we have a situation in Ontario where most schools at the secondary level are not on an eight-period day. A number of years ago, many schools in Ontario shifted the way they approached the teaching of credits away from an eight-period day all year to a semester system so that students take half of their credits in the first semester, complete them at the end of the first semester and then take the other half of their credits in the second semester. Instead of an eight-period day of periods anywhere from half an hour to 40 minutes each, most schools have a four-period day, and the periods run anywhere from an hour to 75 minutes or so. If you're going to increase the instructional time by 25 minutes, it doesn't fit into the timetable. It can't be done.

What is the reason there have been so many disruptions in negotiations and difficulty in negotiations beyond the fact that the boards don't have enough money? It's simply because most of the boards are saying, "In order to meet the requirements that the government is asking for in terms of total instructional time per day, we have to ask each

teacher to teach one more period." But one more period is not 25 minutes per day; it's an hour to 75 minutes. So the argument even in terms of the number of minutes is wrong. The argument is not over 25 minutes; it's over an additional hour or 75 minutes of instruction.

The interesting thing is that most teachers are not so concerned about having to teach an extra period. What they are concerned about is the additional preparation, marking, consultation with parents and other members of staff that will go with having an additional 30 students per day. Instead of having perhaps 90 students a day, they're now going to have 120 students a day.

Of course the government now says, "That means there's more contact between teachers and students, because each teacher has more students." How silly. A teacher is one individual, so if the individual has 120 students instead of 90, that means less time for that teacher with each individual student during the day. That's elementary. But the government members don't want to understand that, I don't think. I hope they don't understand it, because if they do, then they're not telling us the truth when they are making their speeches and saying that there's going to be more time for each individual student with the teacher.

Mr Poulter: That would make them liars. No, no.

Mr Shea: And you know we're telling the truth.

Mr Wildman: I know you're mistaken.

Mr Shea: You know we're telling the truth.

Mr Wildman: People who are mistaken when they tell

the truth are still mistaken.

It's a question then about, can the teachers meet their

professional obligation to students properly? Some boards have said they can shift and change the timetable to meet the requirements that the government had for an additional 25 minutes per day of instruction by lengthening each individual period in the semestered system, instead of requiring an additional period to be taught by the teacher. Instead of it being, let's say, an hour period, it now would become a 75-minute period. So the additional number of minutes per period would work out to the required number of minutes in the week.

But this government says: "No, you can't do that. You can't just lengthen the number of minutes per period. That

isn't going to do what we want to do." Why? It does mean the teachers would be teaching the number of minutes required, but the government then betrays its real agenda when they say that's not acceptable. The real agenda is they want to have fewer teachers, not each individual teacher teaching more minutes by lengthening the number of minutes per period. No. Because that doesn't mean fewer teachers. That's what this is about. The government wants to have fewer teachers in the system.

I'm not surprised that most members of the public — parents and ratepayers — don't understand all of this. They aren't involved with setting timetables and working out the computer models for how we can end up with this number of instructional minutes per day. That's fine. But I think it became very clear when this government said, "No, you can't just lengthen each period to get the number of minutes required; you've got to ensure that each teacher teaches more periods," that what this government was really about was ensuring fewer teachers, not ensuring that the number of teachers we now have teach more minutes.

Some boards suggested that maybe one way they could do it is to have each staff member teach six and a half periods instead of seven. It's not clear if this will be allowed under this bill. It doesn't say it will be, but it doesn't say it won't be. I'm not sure if that is one of the solutions that would be acceptable under this bill.

Another proposal some boards had was that there could be team teaching. In other words, you could have two teachers teaching the additional course, so in fact they're each actually teaching a half more, rather than a full course. Again, it's not clear whether this is allowed under this bill.

Speaker, I notice that we are nearing the witching hour. I would like to adjourn my debate at this moment and bring up some other interesting issues related to Bill 63, the son of Bill 62, when we return to this matter on the order paper.

The Deputy Speaker: Indeed, yes, it is 6 of the clock. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1:59.

tomorrow.

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Yorkview	Klees, Frank (PC)
York South / -Sud	Sergio, Mario (L)
Nickel Belt	Kennedy, Gerard (L)
Vacant	

CONTENTS

Tuesday 29 September 1998

ROYAL ASSENT

SECOND READINGS

The Lieutenant Governor.....2058

Instruction Time: Minimum

Standards Act, 1998, Bill 63,
Mr David Johnson.....2058

Mr David Johnson.....2067, 2067
Mr Galt.....2064
Mr Patlen.....2065
Mr Wildman.....2066, 2076, 2078
Mr Baird.....2066
Mr Bradley.....2066
Mrs McLeod.....2067, 2077
Mr Smith.....2076
Mr Conway.....2077
Mr Pouliot.....2077
Debate adjourned.....2081

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 29 septembre 1998

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 1998 sur l'obligation de rendre

compte des voyages ministériels,
projet de loi 64, M. Bartolucci
Adopté.....2045

SANCTION ROYALE

La lieutenant-gouverneur.....2058

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 1998 sur les heures

d'enseignement : normes
minimales, projet de loi 63,
M. David Johnson
Débat ajourné.....2081

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Northern health services

Mr Gravelle.....2043
Mushroom plant
Mr Len Wood.....2043

Occupational health and safety
Mr Stewart.....2043

Premier's report card
Mrs McLeod.....2044

Plant closure
Mr Kormos.....2044

Animal welfare
Mr Jim Brown.....2044

Transportation of dangerous goods
Mr Bartolucci.....2045

Issues in Hamilton
Mr Christopherson.....2045

Prostitution
Mr Shea.....2045

FIRST READINGS

Ministerial Travel Accountability
Act, 1998, Bill 64, Mr Bartolucci
Agreed to.....2045

Mr Bartolucci.....2046

ORAL QUESTIONS

Education
Mr McGuinty.....2046

Mr Hodgson.....2046

Property taxation
Mr McGuinty.....2047

Mr Eves.....2047, 2048
Mr Agostino.....2048

Textbooks
Mr Hampton.....2048

Nurse practitioners
Mr Hampton.....2049

Long-term care
Mr McGuinty.....2050

Mr Jackson.....2050

Air quality

Mrs Churley.....2051

Mr Wilson.....2051

Skills development
Mr Lessard.....2051

Mr Tascona.....2051

Mr Palladini.....2051

Home care

Mr Gerresen.....2052

Mr Jackson.....2052

Labour dispute

Mr Christopherson.....2053

Mr Flaherty.....2053

Social policy review

Mr Galt.....2053

Mr Cunningham.....2053

School closures
Mr Sergio.....2054

Mr David Johnson.....2054

Children's health services

Mrs Boyd.....2054

Mrs Wilmer.....2054

PETITIONS

Heritage conservation
Mr Lessard.....2055

Protection for health care workers
Mr O'Toole.....2055

Mr Hudak.....2056

Mr Baird.....2057

Government advertising
Mr Ruprecht.....2055, 2057

Psychiatric hospitals
Mr Christopherson.....2056

Hotel Dieu Hospital
Mr Bradley.....2056

Abortion
Mr Klees.....2056

Municipal restructuring
Mr Gerritsen.....2057

Compensation for hepatitis C patients
Mr Arnott.....2057

Hospital restructuring
Mr Christopherson.....2058

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Northern health services

Mr Gravelle.....2043
Mushroom plant
Mr Len Wood.....2043

Occupational health and safety
Mr Stewart.....2043

Premier's report card
Mrs McLeod.....2044

Plant closure
Mr Kormos.....2044

Animal welfare
Mr Jim Brown.....2044

Transportation of dangerous goods
Mr Bartolucci.....2045

Issues in Hamilton
Mr Christopherson.....2045

Prostitution
Mr Shea.....2045

FIRST READINGS

Ministerial Travel Accountability
Act, 1998, Bill 64, Mr Bartolucci
Agreed to.....2045

Mr Bartolucci.....2046

ORAL QUESTIONS

Education
Mr McGuinty.....2046

Mr Hodgson.....2046

Property taxation
Mr McGuinty.....2047

Mr Eves.....2047, 2048
Mr Agostino.....2048

Textbooks
Mr Hampton.....2048

Nurse practitioners
Mr Hampton.....2049

Long-term care
Mr McGuinty.....2050

Mr Jackson.....2050

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Second Session, 36th Parliament

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Deuxième session, 36^e législature

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Wednesday 30 September 1998

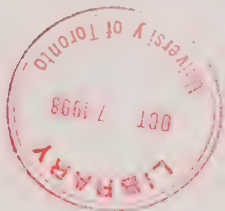
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 30 septembre 1998

in their property taxes, they're concerned about the failure of this government to create jobs in their community and they know that this is all the result of the Mike Harris tax scheme, a tax scheme that benefits those who are the most well-off in Ontario, a tax scheme that the Liberals say they would not do anything about.

Only Blain Morin can send the message to this government that enough is enough. Blain Morin is the fighter we need here in Queen's Park, and I look forward to welcoming Blain Morin as the next member for Nickel Belt here in the Legislature of Ontario.

MICHAEL AND MATTHEW McLENNAN

Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie): It is with great pleasure that I rise today to introduce Matthew and Michael McLennan to my colleagues in the House. These two young men from the riding of York-Mackenzie, and more specifically King City, will be leaving next week to represent Canada at the world age group trampolining championships in Sydney, Australia.

Last May, Matthew placed second in the 18 and up age group championships and third in the junior nationals, which were held in Montreal. Michael placed third in the 15 to 17 age group championship and fourth in the junior nationals. These finishes earned them a place on our distinguished Canadian team.

We in York region are extremely proud to be the home of the Skyriders Trampoline Place on Leslie Street, where Matthew and Michael have been training for the past three years under the direction of their coaches Dave Ross and Angelo Despotas.

It is a distinct pleasure to recognize the efforts and accomplishments of these two young men, who represent not only my riding but our province and our country on the world stage. I also want to recognize their parents, Jane and John McLennan, who over the years have provided the behind-the-scenes encouragement and support without which these accomplishments would not have been possible. They represent the millions of parents across our province who volunteer their time and resources in support of their children's dreams. I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating Matthew, Michael and the entire Canadian world championship team.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): Tomorrow morning all MPPs in the House have the opportunity to assist me in passing a resolution that has

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 30 September 1998

*The House met at 1:30.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TREATY 3 FIRST NATIONS

Mr Frank Michlash (Kenora): I'm delighted to stand today to congratulate and extend best wishes to the First Nation communities under Treaty 3 who will be gathering this weekend to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the signing of their treaty. I am also pleased that my leader, Dalton McGuinty, will accompany me to Eagle Lake, where we will join Chief Francis Kavanagh, Grand Chief Charles Fox, host Chief Arnold Gaudner and many other chiefs, elders and First Nation members to celebrate this most historic anniversary.

Since its signing in 1873, Treaty 3 communities have undergone considerable growth and change. Encompassing some 14,000 people and more than 25 communities in Ontario, Manitoba and Minnesota, Treaty 3 has protected the rights of these first nations and has indeed been a treaty based upon honour and mutual respect: respect for the land, respect for history, respect for language, culture and traditions.

As you are aware, Mr Speaker, my riding is the home of more than 50 vibrant and diverse First Nation communities, and I am very proud to have worked with and represented these here in the Legislature for the past 11 years. At this time I would ask all members to join me in congratulating Treaty 3 on this most historic anniversary.

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): Just to begin I want to welcome my friend in the members' gallery, Grant Cloutier, but remind people out there that tomorrow is election day in Nickel Belt. If the polls hold true, Blain Morin is going to be joining us as a member of this Legislature sometime next week.

Blain has been campaigning hard to carry on that tradition started by Floyd Laughren 27 years ago. What he's been hearing as he's been going door to door and talking on the phone is that people in Nickel Belt are concerned about cuts to hospitals, about the laying off of nurses and the absolute lack of reinvestment in community services by this government. They're concerned about the closing of schools, they're concerned about the increases

everything to do with health care in the ridings you come from.

I'd like to remind all MPPs in the House that the

resolution I'll be presenting tomorrow morning at 11 am involves improving funding in the hospital and health systems, sufficient capital dollars being supplied on a timely basis, and striking an immediate independent review to see exactly the effects of restructuring on patients, patients not just in Windsor but right across Ontario.

I'd like to remind the House too that you too will have your tax machines whirring as mine has. We have a number of hospitals, constituents across Ontario, who have stepped forward and are prepared, despite being afraid to speak out against the government, to stand up and say that things are not going well in the health system where you come from.

I might mention in particular, members who represent the area of Belleville, Scarborough, Palmerston, Cambridge, Pembroke, even those from Windsor, St John's Hospital in North York, St Thomas Elgin, Riversdale health care centre — and the list goes on.

We'll be talking about it more tomorrow, but I'm looking for help from every MPP in this House. We hope you'll all be here for the vote at 12 noon. It means the difference between life and death in many places right across Ontario.

HOMELINESS

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): I have received

a letter from Cathy Crowe, a registered nurse who is writing on behalf of the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee. She says the following, and I think this is important for all members of the House:

"The Toronto Disaster Relief Committee is asking you to endorse our call to have all levels of government declare homelessness a national disaster which requires immediate emergency humanitarian relief.

"We are a group made up of housing experts, academics, business people, health care workers, social workers, anti-poverty activists and the faith community. We have worked with homeless people, studied homelessness, and have watched the homeless crisis worsen daily. We have bandaged the injuries caused by being homeless and have attended the funerals of many homeless people.

"We have asked ourselves these questions: Why is this crisis not dealt with like the ice storm in eastern Canada, or like the flooding in Manitoba? Why are governments not responding to the hundreds of homeless people's deaths?"

"Why are they ignoring the threat of diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and hepatitis which are related to people's homelessness? Why is it that common sense doesn't dictate that this is one of the largest and most serious national disasters that Canada has ever faced?"

We need to act now and we need massive and immediate government intervention. If you want to make this Conservative government accountable for our housing

DAVID NICHOLSON

Mr Gerry Martinuk (Cambridge): It is with a heavy heart that I stand here today to recognize a true hero.

On August 12, 1998, all of Cambridge suffered a great tragedy in the drowning death of 12-year-old Mark Gage, son of John and Jane and brother to Ted, Matt, Meredith, Sarah and Laura.

During the recovery efforts, Constable David Nicholson, a 10-year veteran of the Waterloo regional police force, lost his life in the course of duty.

Constable Nicholson, husband to Wendy and father to three young children, Mitchell, Reed and Josh, will be remembered by all as a true hero.

I ask the question, "Why do police officers risk their lives for us every day?" I answer with one word, "duty."

"Duty," a word that seems archaic and unfashionable in our complex modern world, a word we certainly do not connect with our Sunday afternoon sports stars whom many mistakenly consider heroes.

People of Ontario pay homage and tribute to a true hero, Constable David Nicholson. The highest accolade: He did his duty.

To the families of Dave Nicholson and Mark Gage, please accept our sympathy and love.

1340

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): Yesterday was a very sad day for the African-Canadian community. Our leader, Dalton McGuinty, had requested the Minister of Long-Term Care to reconsider bunnings that went on in his ministry of a proposal that was put forward and was denied because they said it was one minute late.

The African-Canadian community was responding to a call by the government to address a desperate need within that community for the elderly who have been needing this care. We feel very much so and the community at large tells me that they feel extremely disappointed by the manner in which the minister handled that affair and the insensitive manner in which he responded, which is consistent with the way the government is doing these things.

I will appeal to the minister to reconsider that decision, to take a look again at that tender to make sure they can address that desperate need.

I also call upon the community at large to call the minister and call the Premier to say that this need can be addressed. We hope this call is not in vain. We hope this tender was not one of those shams, that they had hoped to address the elderly concern within those communities. The ethnic community needs to address their elderly who are not being very much accepted in some of the other communities.

I urge this government and this minister's colleagues to speak to the minister, who was quite insensitive yesterday, and I hope that he'll respond accordingly.

COURT STAFFING

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On behalf of the NDP candidate in Nickel Belt, Blain Morin, I want to raise a very serious problem that has been troubling the administration of justice in Chapleau for some time.

On Wednesday, September 9, the provincial court session in Chapleau was, for a second time, delayed because there was no justice of the peace to preside over the court. There is only one justice of the peace in Chapleau, and if that individual is not available, then court proceedings have to be postponed. This is the second time this has happened.

In this particular situation on September 9, a justice of the peace had to travel to Chapleau at the last minute from Wawa, a distance of over 90 miles, for a truncated session of the court to proceed in the afternoon. But that meant most of the hearings that were scheduled for that day, for the morning, did not take place and had to be postponed.

It's obvious that the government needs to appoint a second justice of the peace for Chapleau as soon as possible. Blain Morin has suggested that this should be done quickly so that we don't have a repetition of what happened on September 9. The reeve, Earle Freeborn, has also called for an appointment.

Justice delayed is justice denied.

NICKEL BELT BY-ELECTION

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): There certainly is a very interesting and informative editorial in the Sudbury Star this morning. I'll read it for members:

"In Nickel Belt" the PC candidate "Courtemanche: A Clear Voice.

"Despite all the political heavyweights who have come to Nickel Belt to fling their respective parties during the past few weeks, only one candidate has managed to convey a clear message to voters.

"Gerry Courtemanche has enunciated his position on such issues as stricter penalties for young offenders, developing opportunities for small businesses and fair taxation.

"As he has campaigned, Courtemanche has remained focused" on his and his government's decisions and policies, which are admirable.

"Both the Liberal and NDP candidates, as representatives of the opposition parties, have been content to offer realistic solutions for local issues or clearly outlined their visions for the riding. This point was raised more than once by audience members at all-candidates debates in the riding."

The editor stated, "Neither opposition candidate has offered realistic alternatives to Tory policies."

Clearly, "Now the riding has a unique opportunity.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I beg leave to inform the House that today the Clerk received the eighth report of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 105(g)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I would like to take this opportunity to invite all members to welcome to our chamber and indeed to our country a special visitor who is seated at the table, Mr Mshiyeni Dlamini, who is the Clerk-at-the-Table, Senate, Houses of Parliament of the Kingdom of Swaziland. Welcome.

In the government members' gallery is the ex-member for London South, Mr Gordon Walker. Welcome.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TEACHERS AMENDMENT ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ORDRE DES ENSEIGNANTES ET DES ENSEIGNANTS DE L'ONTARIO

Mr Wildman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to increase teacher representation at the Ontario College of Teachers and to make other amendments to the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996/Projet de loi 65, Loi visant à accroître la représentation des enseignants au sein de l'Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario et apportant d'autres modifications à la Loi de 1996 sur l'Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): This bill amends the Ontario College of Teachers Act. The composition of the council of the college is changed, increasing the proportion of elected members to the college so that they make up 75% of the council. Provisions are added to provide that the council or a committee will not have a quorum unless a majority of the elected council members are present.

On behalf of the people of this province and the government of Ontario, I'd like to pass on our condolences and wishes to his three daughters, Nancy, Catherine and Shirley, and the entire Nixon family.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): My colleagues and I in the Liberal Party want to join the government House leader in expressing our condolences to the Nixon family. I think the government House leader is his wont, touched all of the main points. Gordon Walker is here today. Gord was part of that class of 1971 of which the late Mr Nixon was also a member. From all the stories I heard when I came here some 23 years ago, Mr Nixon was truly a man of the people out in the west end and we certainly join with the government in expressing our condolences to his family.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I rise today to express, on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus, our condolences to the family of George Nixon, a former member of this House, and to join representatives of the other two parties in paying tribute to the time that he served here in this House from 1971 to 1975. The government House leader has already given an outline of the time spent and the work that George Nixon did here in the Parliament. I want to give you a slightly different perspective because he was also a neighbour of mine. He lived on Salem Avenue, only a block away from where I am, so I knew George Nixon during the period that he was here. I was in high school with one of his daughters, and in the neighbourhood where I lived and where he lived, certainly everybody was aware of George Nixon.

The comments that have been made about his link to the community, I can tell you from the community, were very clear and very evident. That continued even after he left this place in 1976, with many people there still calling on him for advice and still looking to him for answers to the daily problems they dealt with. He was really one of those politicians who can be described very accurately as being of the community and certainly aware of what was going on in the various neighbourhoods. That is the memory I will keep of him, as somebody who obviously, although in a very different political spectrum, cared about the community and brought that kind of very down-to-earth approach, perhaps in part because of his own background as the son of Irish immigrants and also because of his work background. Before he came to this Legislature he worked for 25 years at Continental Can, first as a stock keeper and later as a foreman, so I think he never forgot that link to the people of the riding.

I knew him from that perspective and am glad to have the opportunity to express here today, on behalf of our caucus, our condolences to his three daughters, Nancy, Catherine and Shirley, to his sons-in-law and to the nine grandchildren, and, as I was at the memorial service the other day, to conclude my comments with the same Irish blessing that says, "May the road rise to meet you, Irish blessing that says, "May the road rise to meet you, may the wind be at your back, may the sun shine warmly

The council will be required to elect one of its members to be the chair. All the committees will be required to have a majority of elected council members.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I would like to ask the unanimous consent of the House for some brief remarks on the passing of two former members of the House to give the opportunity of various members of the House to give some brief remarks on the passing of two former members of the House, George Nixon and John Bakins, who passed away during the recess.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

GEORGE NIXON

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I'd like to pay tribute today to a former member of the House, George Nixon, who represented the riding of Dovercourt, an area where he was born and raised.

George was a leader in his community throughout his entire life. He served for some time in the military. He was a very religious man who was deeply involved with the Baptist church. He was involved with the Cerebral Palsy Foundation and the United Appeal, and was a founder of Camp Kwasind for underprivileged children.

In 1971 he was elected to the Ontario Legislature for our party for the neighbourhood in which he grew up, that being the riding of Dovercourt.

Frank Drea, who was the former member for Scarborough Centre, described George Nixon as one of the last old-style politicians. During a great time of change in social policy, he was devoted to the well-being of his constituents and the people of Ontario. George knew everybody on a very personal level in his riding and met with them directly, spending a great deal of his time as an MPP listening to their ideas and concerns over a cup of coffee in a local coffee shop or restaurant.

At Queen's Park he was considered totally reliable, never missing a committee assignment or a vote. He was never described in our party as a true, solid backbencher who was there when we needed him to vote or needed to count on him. In fact, the only time George wasn't working hard for his constituents at Queen's Park was when he was doing things at his local church, and he was very active in that.

Former MPPs describe George as being very down to earth and every man's man in terms of his representation here. He was very straightforward and not afraid to discuss sensitive issues in caucus and quite frankly was period in which he had the opportunity to sit here because many other members were intimidated to speak at that time in caucus.

On a last note I'd like to say, in terms of how he was described by Frank Drea, that George Nixon gave politics and politicians a good name. He worked hard for his people and he did a great job while he was here.

on your face, and until we meet again, may God hold you lovingly in the hollow of his hand."

JOHN EAKINS

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): It is with great sadness that I inform the House of the passing of John Eakins, who passed away on September 16 of this year in his 75th year.

As the current member for Victoria-Haliburton and on behalf of the people of Victoria-Haliburton and the Premier and the government of Ontario, I'd like to extend our sympathies to the Eakins family and to pay tribute to his years of public service and his work in the community and in the riding.

As the members of this House will recall, John was first elected to the Legislature in 1975 and he served with distinction and honour until 1990. In that capacity, he was the Minister of Tourism in the Peterson cabinet from 1985 to 1987 and he was subsequently the Minister of Municipal Affairs from 1987 to 1989.

Before that, John had a lengthy service working on behalf of the people of Victoria and Haliburton in numerous capacities. He was a councillor in the town of Lindsay. Later, from 1966 to 1971, he was the mayor of Lindsay and brought about a number of initiatives, including the twinning with a city in Japan which has been very successful. At that time it was a courageous move.

There was a time when relations with Japan weren't as healthy as they might be today in the public's attitude, and it was the vision that John had that was progressive for Victoria and for Lindsay that served the constituents well.

He was also the warden of Victoria county and he served on numerous committees. Even in retirement John was active in local politics, helping out where he could in a number of community organizations such as Rotary and the Sports Hall of Fame, and in a number of other activities he helped the people of Lindsay and Victoria county.

He started out as a barber and hairdresser in Lindsay, the town he had been born and raised in. I think it was in this occupation that he developed his great listening ability. People of the riding knew that John cared about them. He could listen and he had a friendly manner, which could be called upon if you needed assistance. He served his community in a non-partisan manner and I was proud to be able to say that I was a friend of his. Even before I entered into politics, I knew him. He was always there to offer advice or to help if you needed help. I think that speaks volumes.

Even this summer, Premier Harris and I had the opportunity to spend an afternoon with John when we were at his cottage on Four Mile Lake. He still followed politics actively, cared about the people of Victoria and Haliburton and offered some good advice.

It was a pleasure knowing John. He will be greatly missed by all the residents of Victoria and Haliburton.

On behalf of the government and the people of Victoria and Haliburton, I'd just like to say that our thoughts and our prayers are with his family, Barry, Janice, Karen and their spouses, his grandchildren and the entire Eakins family.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): It was about 50 years ago at a federal-provincial conference, I think in Ottawa, that the legendary Premier of Ontario Leslie M. Frost said in the midst of some very complicated negotiations about some issue of intergovernmental finance that he looked at this as one would look at it from the barber's chair in Lindsay. In telling that story, and he told it many times, he tried to convey, and conveyed very effectively over his long and very successful career as first minister of the Ontario government, that it was from the barber's chair in communities like Lindsay that one really understood the common sense of the common people. John Eakins, as the Minister of Northern Development has just observed, was for many years a barber in Lindsay.

My colleagues and I want to join the government and our friends in the New Democratic Party in paying tribute to the public life of our former colleague.

I knew John very well. We were elected on the same day in 1975 and we were to share offices in the old north wing for all of the years prior to our taking office in 1985. John Diefenbaker used to say that the Liberals were so scarce in Saskatchewan in his lifetime that they needed the protection of the game laws.

Laughter.

Mr Conway: You should laugh, because it was largely true — the later part of his life, I should say.

Liberals in Victoria county were pretty scarce people. In fact, I think there were only two Liberals to sit provincially for Victoria in this century. One of them was a very good friend of my grandfather's, Bill Newman, a dairyman from Lorneville, and John Eakins in the later years. Victoria county is as traditionally Conservative as it gets. It sends people with names like Hodgson and Scott and Hughes and Carew to represent the good people in Parliament or in the Legislature.

John in that sense was an exception. He won only after being beaten by the current member's uncle on at least one occasion. John was defeated in 1967 and again in 1971. I remember saying to him, "How could you run a third time in Victoria county as a Liberal?" I don't know that I would do it. I don't know that I would have done it even a second time. John said in that smiling, friendly way of his: "You know, I like Bob Nixon. He came and talked to me and said, 'John, once more for the team.'" In the face of very real odds, odds that most of us would have simply passed and said, "Thanks but no thanks," he ran a third time in 1975 and he won. I think part of the legacy and the lesson of the public life of John Eakins is that politics is about more than just winning. He lost, and lost badly, in very difficult circumstances, but that didn't deter his interest. He was willing to once again step into the breach in 1975.

I was lucky. I won the first time. I don't know that I would ever have won a second time had I lost the first time.

1400

time out, and I'll tell you, I don't know that I would ever have volunteered to be the Liberal candidate in Victoria, because it's tough country, and because John was a Liberal from Victoria, he was a pretty moderate, what you call pragmatic, Liberal. He knew the range of possibilities for Liberal politicians provincially in Victoria, and he never ceased to remind the cabinet and the caucus about that. In addition, I say we would have done much better than we did had we listened more carefully to John's advice in the later years of the last decade.

He was a great office mate. There was no issue too small, no call too early or too late, no far distant part of the northern reaches of Haliburton that he did not attend to with the assiduousness that we could all take as our guide and our example.

I don't want to go on too long and I won't. I just simply say I was pleased to join the minister and former Premier Peterson and his wife at the funeral service a week ago Monday at the Queen Street United Church in Lindsay. It was a beautiful sunny, breezy late summer afternoon, and that's the way John would have wanted it. He was a happy warrior.

In the end I thought John became wonderful in his — he was always good with Frost. If you wanted really good Les Frost stories, I used to get them from John, and in the end I was going to say he almost became a bit of a caricature of Frost, because he could put his hands out over those troubled waters. He developed a kind of silver mane like the great man itself, and oh, how he regaled us with the great Les Frost stories of his part of central Ontario.

For me, in conclusion, I say as I join the minister in paying tribute to John and his family, and his wife, Iris, who predeceased him in the mid-1980s, one of the really significant sadnesses in this for me is that the style and quality of the politics John Eakins and Leslie M. Frost represented is passing from our midst, I think to our detriment. Thank you.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algonia): I want to join with my colleagues in paying tribute to John Eakins. I, like my friend from Renfrew North, was elected on the same day John was elected to this place. We came to know each other quite well, and he became a very good friend of mine across the aisle and in private life outside of this place.

I'm sure everyone who knew John would agree with me that John was a gentleman in every sense of that word. He was a friendly person who cared about concerns and, frankly, although he was partisan, he was not partisan in a way that we have come to understand that word here. If a member of another caucus had a concern when he was serving in the executive council for which he was responsible, he genuinely tried to resolve it, and the fact that the individual coming to see him about the problem was from another caucus didn't make any difference at all. John spent a long time here and served his constituents very well, and he had a nice way about him, a quiet way but a great sense of humour. I must say on a personal basis that I feel the loss, as many of his friends do,

ORAL QUESTIONS

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): My question is for the Minister of Education. This morning the 43 school boards that did not get any new schools in yesterday's announcement got the bad news about how many schools you expect them to close. You are going to leave the tough decisions about which schools will actually close to the trustees, but we can see today that your arbitrary formula is going to mean massive numbers of schools closing across the province.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): My question is for the Minister of Education. This morning the 43 school boards that did not get any new schools in yesterday's announcement got the bad news about how many schools you expect them to close. You are going to leave the tough decisions about which schools will actually close to the trustees, but we can see today that your arbitrary formula is going to mean massive numbers of schools closing across the province.

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Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): As I've said here many times before, we're not the next school year?

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requiring one school to close in the province of Ontario, not any schools to close in Ontario. I can confirm a historical fact. That historical fact is that when the Liberals were in power between 1985 and 1990, there were 136 schools closed in the province.

Through the funding formula that I announced yesterday, I'm delighted to say that over the next three years there will be about \$1.5 billion worth of new school construction in Ontario. This will accommodate about 120,000 students. Indeed in September and through to January there will be 25 school openings in the province of Ontario.

1410

Mrs McLeod: I'm talking about something which is so unbelievable that it's difficult to credit the numbers you put out yesterday. We're talking about the potential of 600 schools or more having to be closed across this province. We're talking about your formula creating chaos over the next year that is beyond even imagining. You have arbitrarily decided for 43 school boards that they have what you have decided is surplus space and that they're going to have to close schools on a widespread basis. You don't care where the space is, you don't care where the students are, you don't care how far the students who are displaced might have to be bused in order that they can find someplace to go to school. You just want the locks on the school doors.

If you close 500 elementary schools and 100 secondary schools, you are going to force tens of thousands of students on to school buses, you're going to disrupt their education and you're going to force them to go who knows where because your formula says their school's closed. Take some responsibility. Tell us how many schools are going to close and how many students you're going to force on to buses.

Hon David Johnson: We hear from the Liberal critic. Let's hear from the chair of the Toronto Catholic District School Board. The chair of the Toronto Catholic District School Board says: "We are extremely pleased that the minister has recognized the need to move our students into permanent, high-quality facilities. Today's announcement" — that's the announcement with regard to new pupil places — "is a good start to addressing the capital needs of this board."

Clearly we've taken a tremendous initiative in terms of flowing monies to school boards based on need right across Ontario, giving the resources to those boards that are short on space to build new schools, to put additions on to schools, elementary schools, secondary schools, a \$1.5-billion program over the next three years, unprecedented in Ontario.

Mrs McLeod: I understand why the Minister of Education does not want to talk about the 43 boards that didn't get any new schools yesterday, the 43 boards that are going to have to close as many as 600 schools in the course of the next year. Minister, if you thought the crisis was over with your back-to-work legislation passed, think again because the crisis in education is just beginning.

otherwise.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): I know that the privacy commissioner reviewed this matter with respect to how files were kept and found nothing wrong with respect to the issue of missing files. The deputy has explained that that are utilized in terms of retention of files. Beyond that, Superintendent Fox, whom I know quite well, has an outstanding record of service in the policing community of this province. I would not want anyone to suggest

he was transferred? possibly happen that his files were destroyed shortly after Mr Fox's files would be to an inquiry, how could it were destroyed shortly after he left. Knowing how crucial from your deputy, that all of Mr Fox's electronic files transferred. We now know, based on sworn testimony On April 19, 1996, seven months later, Ron Fox was causing death.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Solicitor General. It has to do with key Ipperwash files that are missing from your office. As you know, a key participant in the Ipperwash affair was Mr Ron Fox, OPP officer on secondment to your office. He was at the September 6 interministerial meeting where the Premier's executive assistant said she'd been talking to the Premier the previous night. "Out of the park only," were her instructions to the group. Mr Fox then made a phone call to the police command post at 12 minutes after 11 that morning. That evening Dudley George was shot and a police officer convicted of criminal negligence

IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Hon David Johnson: I haven't heard so much nonsense in a long time. We're not requiring any schools to be closed. The member opposite knows this. In terms of school boards looking at the space they have, the school boards have this responsibility to accommodate their students. In fact what we have required of the school boards is that they consult with their parents if they are deciding to close a school. We require the school boards to consult with the parents and then to come forward with a plan. But it's up to the school boards. We give them the money: the money for maintenance, the money for new construction, the money they need to accommodate the students they have. We give the responsibility to the school boards in conjunction with their local parents. I think that's where the responsibility should lie.

You are demanding that schools shut down because you have an arbitrary formula that says they've got too much space. You actually gave a direction to the board today that you want their school closure plans in today. You insist that the locks be on those schools by the end of June and the students be on the buses by September 1. You have set all the rules. You're setting all the bottom lines. Take some responsibility. Stand up and tell us how many schools are going to close by June 30 of this year.

Mr Phillips: On the contrary, the files were destroyed after he left your office, after he left your employ and went back to the OPP. I have nothing but respect for Mr Fox.

This is an extremely serious matter. It is beyond my belief how these files could be destroyed seven months after the shooting. This is one of the most serious events in Ontario's dealings with our first nations. A First Nation person died, an OPP officer convicted of criminal negligence causing it, and yet the files in your office were destroyed seven months after it.

I repeat that the privacy commissioner examined this and said, "As a result of the activities described by the deputy minister, the ministry has been unable to retrieve any electronic records left behind by the named employee at the time he left the position of special adviser, first nations."

Mr Fox left the files. He was transferred and then the files disappeared. I ask you again, Minister, how in the world could this possibly happen in the Ministry of the Solicitor General?

Hon Mr Runciman: I can't go beyond the fact that the privacy commissioner has looked at the explanation with respect to this and has accepted it. The deputy minister has outlined his understanding of the situation and has initiated a review of the electronic retention of files. I can't go beyond that.

Mr Phillips: You have to select your words better, I think, Minister. The privacy commissioner found that the records were gone. That's what he found seven months after this shooting. The most serious event affecting our first nations certainly in this century and yet seven months later the files are gone in your ministry, the key files. We have been calling for a public inquiry now for literally three years. Why? Because it is important we get to the root of this. Now we find, seven months after the shooting, key files being erased, disappearing.

Minister, will you return to this House tomorrow, will you find out why it happened that those files were destroyed and will you give us the assurance that you have personally looked at the files of the other individuals in your office who were involved in this and that those files still exist today?

Hon Mr Runciman: I've indicated, and I can't go beyond what I said earlier with respect to the explanations, that those have been offered by the deputy minister. There was a deputy minister prior to my current deputy who was in office during this period of time. Indeed we are concerned about the loss of these files in terms of our ability to retain very important and critical files. I share your concern with respect to that. The current deputy has initiated a review of this situation and a review of the retention policy.

1420

TEXTBOOKS

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, yesterday I asked you why Ontario schools were forced by your government

to pay inflated prices for school textbooks. The specific example I gave you was Bliss Carman school in Scarborough where teachers estimate that \$9,000 of their \$37,000 book budget was lost to these inflated prices.

As a result of my question yesterday, we've received dozens of calls from teachers across the province. For example, John Campbell, a teacher and a director of the Ontario Curriculum Clearing House, which vets textbooks for use in Ontario schools, told us that you inflated the price for an English dictionary published by ITP Nelson to \$49.19 per book. He can go to a bookstore and buy that book for \$19. You inflated the price by \$30.

We heard from dozens of schools. We estimate that across this province \$20 million of the book budget has been lost to your inflated prices. Minister, who has the money? Who has taken that \$20 million because of those inflated prices? Tell us.

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): As a result of the questions yesterday, we did investigate some of the allegations with regard to the books. We found one book, a science text, for example, which it was claimed could be purchased for \$9.95. The Ministry of Education list price was \$12.44. That was the price before the discount, but after the discount was applied, the price was actually \$8.96, which is a dollar less than the principal claimed he could buy the book for. In addition, that lower price that the Ministry of Education received was an all-inclusive price including shipping and handling, whereas at the school, the school would have to pay shipping and handling and would have to pay a portion of the GST, even after rebate.

A second-language text was about a dollar and a half cheaper through the Ministry of Education program when the bulk price was applied.

We have been assured, and the evidence is here, that we've received the best possible price. We have 3.2 million books in our elementary schools at the best possible —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thanks a lot. Supplementary.

Mr Hampton: It's interesting how the minister changes his story from yesterday. We understand there was a rebate; the point is that rebate didn't go to the schools. The point is that Bliss Carman didn't get that rebate; somebody else did. We want to know who got that rebate, who siphoned off that money.

Yesterday you told us that some of the extra money went to handling, postage and transportation. We talked to the publishers. They tell us that the price they ordinarily give schools already includes that. You've added on an extra handling and transportation charge. Who got that money? Yesterday you tried to tell us it went for taxes, but you don't have to pay taxes on school textbooks.

Minister, you're telling a whole bunch of stories here to avoid coming to the real facts. Just as Mr Campbell told us, you inflated the price of the dictionary by \$30. Who got the \$30? Do I have to help you? Do I have to send something like this over to you so you can look for the

money? Who got the money, Minister? Who got the \$20 million that should have gone to schools and —

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon David Johnson: The facts are very clear on this.

The facts are that we have 3.2 million books going to the elementary students in Ontario at a lower price than the boards could purchase by themselves. The principals are sometimes comparing the list price or the slightly discounted price with the discounted price that the Ministry of Education can receive. The Ministry of Education has received a lower price that some of the teachers aren't seeing.

The question is, who is receiving the benefit of this discount, this \$13-million benefit that we've received because of this bulk purchase, and the answer is the students. The elementary students in Ontario are receiving the benefit. There will be more books, there will be more science equipment, there will be more software purchased for the students of Ontario. That's where the benefit will go.

Mr Hampton: The minister keeps trying to confuse the issue. We talked to the schools. The schools don't have the money in question. We talked to the book publishers. They don't have the money in question. Bliss Carman school is out \$9,000 on their book budget. They don't have it, the publisher doesn't have it.

Mr Campbell gives us the example of this dictionary. You charged \$49 on the government list price. He says he could have bought it for \$19 in a bookstore.

You refuse to tell us who has the money. It seems that about \$20 million in textbook money has gone missing. Who has the money? It's a very simple question. Do we have to send over a looking glass so you can look through your files? The schools don't have the money, the publishers don't have the money, yet you charge inflated prices for those books. Who has the money, Minister? Show us the money, the \$20 million.

Hon David Johnson: The antics of the leader of the third party are unbelievable. This process is simple to understand. We've received 3.2 million books for elementary students across the province. We've received a huge discount involving \$13 million. Do you know where that \$13 million is going? I'll tell you where every last nickel of that \$13 million in discount is going, and by the way, that's an unparalleled discount in Ontario. Every last nickel is going to the students of Ontario. That's where the money is going to.

It's going to every elementary school across the province. If you want to fight against the books, if you want to fight against the quality, you go ahead and do it. But I'll tell you, this government has introduced a system to put 3.2 million books into the elementary schools at the best possible price we could get.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): There are a couple of members here in the opposition gallery today who were in the previous parliament. Mr Dan Waters was

the provincial member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay. Welcome. Larry O'Connor was the previous member for Durham-York, now a councillor for Durham region. Welcome. There is life after this place.

New question, third party.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My second question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. On July 2, two full months ago, a coroner's jury gave you 213 recommendations that would have gone a very long way in preventing the tragic death of Arlene May. On July 10, my colleague the member for Riverdale called on you publicly to implement those recommendations. You have done nothing. Not one of those recommendations from the coroner's jury has been implemented. Since July 2, eight more women in Ontario have died. Eight more women with a history of abuse have been killed. Minister, it was unnecessary for a single one of those women to die. Every one of those tragic incidents could have been prevented. If you were to increase their protection, make the changes the coroner's jury implored you to make, then some of those lives might have been saved. When will you implement the 213 recommendations?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's mental health): In response to what I think is a very serious question, yes, we did get the recommendations on July 2. There was a committee put in place in anticipation of these recommendations. My colleagues the Attorney General and the Solicitor General will respond to these recommendations and the Solicitor General will respond to these recommendations in the appropriate time, as was the Minister of Community and Social Services responding to the recommendations pertaining to shelter services.

We have reviewed the jury's recommendations at the Ontario Women's Directorate and will continue to consult with Status of Women, Canada, regarding follow-up of all of these recommendations with regard to the jury's suggestions and recommendations.

Mr Hampton: Minister, there were 213 specific recommendations. You don't need to go and consult on those. You could have implemented many of those recommendations by now. In fact, what you're doing is going in the opposite direction, because the coroner's jury heard evidence as to why your government's action are inadequate. Specifically, they called on you to develop police and court protocols so that victims are better protected. But we know you're doing exactly the opposite.

For example, because of your government's cuts, courts in Ontario no longer serve court documents, and that includes restraining orders. What it means is that women who have been repeatedly abused have to risk their safety to go tell their abuser that the court says he is no longer supposed to go near them. Because of your cuts, you've put women in that situation of risk. Minister, how could

you put so many women across this province at risk by

putting them in that situation?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I am not going to respond to

the specific example that the leader of the party did bring to our attention today. But I will in this regard. With regard to the courts, we have focused since day one on improving the court system. We have increased the number of victim/witness assistance programs. We have created eight new domestic violence courts which are dedicated to prosecuting abusers and supporting witnesses. We have expanded the domestic assault review teams, which combine the efforts of justice officials with community groups to help combat domestic violence. As we speak, crowns are receiving training on domestic violence and sexual assault. We have established a ministry working group, which I referred to earlier, that is seriously looking at additional recommendations we will respond to in a positive way.

I will respond to the example given to me by the leader of the party in a very few moments because I actually can't respond this minute. I'm sure it does fit into the programs I have already described.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Final supplementary.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Minister, while you fiddle over there in forming committees, eight more women have died. How many more are going to die while you fiddle and try to set up committees? Not only have you ignored the advice of this jury, a jury that spent months examining in detail how the justice system falls

women; your government is now making matters even worse. This is the ultimate offence against women whose lives are in danger.

We're talking here about women who have a history of being repeatedly beaten up. Now they have to put themselves in further jeopardy by taking the court order to their abuser themselves. Can you imagine having to do that? Leaving aside the inadequacies of restraining orders, your government has placed the responsibility for the court order to be delivered to the abuser with the victim. I'll repeat the question, Minister: How can you put so many women at risk?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: Domestic violence is a serious crime. This government will not tolerate it. We have worked with members of this House and members of the community across Ontario to make things better. We knew that the May-Illes jury recommendations would be very specific. We were witnesses during the trial. We have met with people who are involved with the trial recommendations across nine ministries.

It isn't easy to change some of these procedures. But I will say that we have been widely complimented by the jury with regard to a lot of work that has taken place with this government.

Ms Churley: Eight women have died since those recommendations came out.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: With regard to the death of eight women, as I listen to the member of the opposition

at us, not once have I received some positive suggestions from this member as a critic.

The Speaker: Answer.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: Not once have we received any assistance as I have reached out to speak with her about her —

The Speaker: Thank you. New question, official opposition.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South): I have a question for the Minister of Health. I want to mark with you a very significant day of achievement for the Harris health policy. It's another dubious milestone you reached today.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order. We have a new question being put. We'll start again.

Mr Kennedy: Thank you, Speaker. It is important that the minister does hear about the milestone that she is achieving today, that the Harris government's stumbling health policy is accomplishing. We've got another hospital in the province going broke, and this time it's the Ottawa Hospital. The Ottawa Hospital can't serve the patients it's supposed to with the money you provide, so instead, to pay its bills, starting tomorrow, starting in October, it has to go to the banks to do that.

You should be ashamed enough about that, but it's not as if you didn't know and you weren't in a position to prevent this. This hospital came to you last year and came to you again last week with a plan to provide services to patients, to actually keep open three sites, including the Riverside Hospital, and to do this with fewer capital dollars but with a higher level of service to patients. You've got no plan of your own to help patients in Ottawa. You've had your hospital destruction commission there three times. It has no credibility. Today will you agree to the Ottawa Hospital plan to protect patients, or will you force them to go to banks and cut services —

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister of Health.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): I'm not sure who it is that doesn't have credibility, but I would certainly indicate to you that our government has had a plan of action since we were elected in 1995. I can also say to you that since that time I haven't seen a Liberal plan of action. In fact, what has first been done is that you have been doing a tremendous amount of disservice to people in the province. A good example of that is the recent editorial in the Sudbury Star. The Sudbury Star says: "Ontario Liberal Party health critic Gerard Kennedy needs to do some explaining if he wants anyone to believe his claim that \$27 million will be taken from Sudbury's health system next year. Otherwise, the statement made by Kennedy in Sudbury this week is nothing more than a cheap attempt at electioneering that thoughtful voters" —

The Speaker: Thank you, Supplementarity.

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): — roughly two and a half hospitals, driving them into debt.

The Speaker: Order. Member for Ottawa West,

Mr Kennedy: Minister, unlike you and your government, we're accountable. We've responded to this —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Stop the clock. Supplementary.

Mr Kennedy: We stand accountable for our figures. I challenge you to debate outside this House, where I'll prove to you you're cutting \$27 million from Sudbury.

I've written to the Sudbury Star. I'll see you there. What I want to hear from you is not a shrug to the people of Ottawa, because \$65 million has been cut from Ottawa by you and your government and that plan that you claim. You may be proud of that and your members may be proud of that, but we told you —

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): Wrong, wrong.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Member for Nepean, come to order, and the Minister of Community and Social Services as well,

and the Minister of Labour.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Don't tell me it was him behind you.

Mr Kennedy: The people of Ottawa want more than a shrug and political pranks from you. They want you to answer why there's \$65 million less.

This morning our office talked to Hayem Qirbi. Hayem Qirbi has a son, Waleed, who is 26 years old. He's in the Ottawa Civic Hospital. He's suffering because of your cuts. Waleed Qirbi is attended to 12 hours a day by his

parents and 12 hours a day by a nurse that they have to pay for. Hayem Qirbi, thanks to the Harris health policies, is paying \$8,000 a month. Minister, will you act today to help the Qirbis and the other families who won't have proper hospital care unless you move to help them out?

Hon Mrs Wilmer: I'm very pleased at the investment our government has made in Ottawa-Carleton. We need to indicate that the only government that has cut health care spending is the federal government. We have seen a decrease in transfer payments. I'm very proud of the fact that we are helping all people in Ottawa-Carleton. I'm pleased to say that we are spending almost \$87 million more in health services in Ottawa above and beyond the Liberal numbers that you have been communicating.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Nepean, member for York South, come to order. Member for Etobicoke-Humber.

New question, third party.

1440

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Bud Wildman (Algonia): I have a question for the Minister of Education and Training. As the minister will know, tonight anxious parents are gathering in Clinton to talk about the future of their public school. The problem they face is this government's change in the way it funds space in schools. Every school in a board's jurisdiction must be operating at 100% capacity. For the parents and elementary students in Clinton, like the

Minister.

Hon David Johnson: School boards have opened schools, school boards have closed schools, down through the years. When the member opposite was in power, when his party was in power for five years, there were over 100 schools closed in Ontario. This happens each and every year. School boards are given grants from Ontario. They make determinations as to where schools should be opened. I might say that for small schools, this government has actually more than doubled the amount of monies

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you.

schools on the basis of operation at 90% capacity — insisting. Why wouldn't it make more sense to fund

developing the funding plan recommended that the formula be based on 90% capacity, not 100% capacity, as you are

Some members of the minister's own expert panel you, means they have too many student spaces.

you, means they have too many student spaces. Between 90% and 95% capacity, and that, according to 90% capacity. In Peel region, 70 schools are operating at some of their schools have to close. They're operating at they have 5,500 too many student spaces and that's why

Because of this government's funding formula, you say schools are now operating at 90% capacity — all of them. Valley District School Board, all of the elementary closure. I'll give you a couple of examples. In the Thames

100 public schools are on the list for consideration for enough students. Some 29 Catholic schools in Toronto and formula for school boards, not because they don't have schools are closing because of his government's defunding

Mr Wildman: The minister will know that these for the school boards and the parents to work out.

planning in conjunction with their parents. This is a matter different configurations. That they need to do, and than others; some boards are able to operate under whatever schools is they wish. Some boards are more frugal

boards have full leeway to use those monies to incorporate renewal — based on the student population they have. The boards — funding for operations, funding for facilities

school. The province is giving funding to the school province of Ontario is not requiring any board to close any

There is no requirement to close any school. The in their communities.

parents and to work out accommodation plans with parents such change in accommodation space, to consult with required local school boards, if they're contemplating any

Training): This government has not only encouraged but across Ontario?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and

for education for our students and for our communities years. Does the minister really think this is good planning

eliminate a school that's been in that community for 120 of Duntroon, just south of Collingwood, they're going to of thing is happening all over Ontario. In the community from junior kindergarten to OAC, 900 students. This kind

with a school building which will house all the students The plan in Clinton is to combine the local high school

must close.

Matiland District School Board, this means their school

parents of children in 19 other schools in the Avon

going to small schools; in remote and rural areas, again, more than doubled the amount of money going to the school boards. The school boards are working with the parents to come up with the best solutions in their community.

I just want to say finally —

The Speaker: Answer.

Hon David Johnson: — that in terms of the overall funding in the classroom and in totality there will be more money spent in the elementary and secondary schools this year than ever before.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): My question is

for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Last week, Mike Harris and you launched in Paris, Ontario, the \$35-million rural youth job strategy. The next day I had the pleasure of touring with you down in Essex county, in Leamington and in Ridgeway. One of the groups we met with was a group of parents and children involved in the burgeoning greenhouse industry in the Leamington area. Those young people have the advantage of enjoying life and opportunity in rural Ontario. I know that we as a government would like all young people to have that same kind of opportunity if they choose, and all of Ontario to enjoy the prosperity of a strong Ontario economy. Could you tell us how the rural youth job strategy program will improve the skills of youth in rural Ontario and the job opportunities?

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for Francophone affairs): I want to thank my colleague from Chatham-Kent for his question. Yes, I was very proud to be beside the Premier in Paris, Ontario, a week ago when we announced the rural youth job strategy, a strategy that was put together by young people, for young people after consultation with some 1,200 young people, business people and entrepreneurs in rural Ontario. It's a four-year, \$35-million program and it is new money, and I emphasize new money.

It's a tailor-made for young people outside our big cities. It is a strategy that will keep young people where they were born, raised and educated, so that they don't have to go to the urban areas to obtain employment. It's a four-year program and I know it will serve rural youth in Ontario very well.

Mr Carroll: We all know that Ontario is once again the best place to live, work and raise a family, thanks in great part to the courage of the Mike Harris government. Previous governments have launched many make-work projects, designed to create temporary jobs subsidized with the taxpayers' hard-earned dollars. Can you assure the House today that the rural youth job strategy is not just another typical band-aid, short-term program, but in actual fact is a real investment in the youth of rural Ontario?

Hon Mr Villeneuve: The rural youth job strategy is oriented towards forming partnerships with the private sector, where at least 50% of the funds will come from the

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. In your rush to deregulate your ministry and basically make the role of your ministry irrelevant to the people of Ontario, you have reached what I believe is a new low. In a proposal that you posted — and it has had negative feedback from groups in response — you are now proposing a regulation change that funeral homes and hospitals dispose of blood and blood products through a sewer system. As you know, Minister, it is currently a hazardous waste. It has to be treated as such, it has to be contained as such, and it cannot simply be disposed of down the sewer. In the regulations you posted as a proposal, you are now saying that if you get your way, it is OK in Ontario to dump blood into the sewer system right across this province, basically endangering the health of Ontarians every single day.

You have not undertaken any studies into the safety of this. I want to ask you, Minister, do you think it is a good idea to dump blood and blood products down the sewer system in the province of Ontario?

1450

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Of course we're concerned about anything that goes into the municipally owned sewer systems across our province. There has been a technical review of putting this waste product into the sewer system. The regulation the member talks about of course separates out the toxic or the blood which would have come from someone who is seriously ill, where there was a contaminant in that blood. It's clear within that regulation that that blood would not be placed in any kind of sewage. Blood is a biological product, like the other biological products that go into our sanitary sewers as well.

Mr Agostino: That is an amazing answer, that you now are going to be able to separate and tell which is hazardous and which is not hazardous and you're going to ship it to different places or simply put it down the sewer. It is bizarre.

Minister, as you know, you cannot guarantee the safety. You cannot stand up today and give us a 100% guarantee that sewage treatment plants, the water systems in this province, do not fail and that mistakes do not occur, and often in septic tanks, which are included in your regulations, there is also failure. What you're doing in this proposal, frankly, bizarre as it's going to sound to most Ontarians, is putting the health of Ontarians in jeopardy.

There is no system — you have no scientific evidence to show us — that is foolproof, that is totally safe. I just cannot believe that you will not stand today and totally dismiss this ridiculous, stupid suggestion that is listed. You're telling Ontarians that it's acceptable to put this down the sewer system —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order.

Hon Mr Sterling: Unfortunately, all the allegations

test in terms of any kind of medical, technical examination. I think what we should do is act in reaction to what the technical experts advise us about what our sewage plants can handle. This regulation, which hasn't been approved but is there for the public to comment on — if evidence is brought forward during this review period which says this is a bad proposal, then we won't do it, but the evidence to date is that this is the best way to deal with this waste product. That is what the technical answer is.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): My question is to the Minister of Transportation. I want to ask and try to change your attitude today, if I may, on the question of red light traffic deaths, because what I heard from you yesterday I found unacceptable.

You know that the mayor of Toronto and the chief of police here in Toronto yesterday appealed to you to allow video cameras to be used in charging motorists who run red lights. I don't need to remind you, I hope, that this is

about stopping a crime that killed 16 people in the GTA alone last year. So I hope you will answer with more than just the sarcasm with which you treated the issue yesterday and take seriously the proposal which I sent to you earlier in our letter, in which I indicated to you our willingness on behalf of our caucus to offer quick passage to a bill which would make the necessary amendments to the Highway Traffic Act and the Municipal Act, if that's required, to be able to put in place red lights so we can put a stop to the deaths that might continue if the situation is

allowed to continue. Will you do that, Minister?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Transportation): I'd like to thank the honourable member for the letter, which I did receive today, and treat the question in the spirit in which it was intended, as a serious question on a

Indeed the honourable member is quite correct. Red light running is a fatal problem. About 2% of all fatalities occur at intersections as a result of red light running, and that's 2% too many as far as this government is concerned.

Just as this government introduced community safety zone legislation which allowed a doubling of fines by municipalities, just as this government introduced, through Mr. Eves's budget, more money for community policing, just as this government more than doubled the minimum fine and increased the set fine for red light running, in the spirit of co-operation I'd be more than happy to sit down

with the honorable member, and if he has some creative solutions that allow us to use the technology and identify and target the aggressive drivers in our society, I'm all ears and I'd be quite happy to work with him and his caucus.

Mr. Silipo: I don't know if that was a bit of an opening on the minister's side or if he's simply reiterating his position that until there is a way that only addresses the issue of drivers and the privacy concern that he has continued to raise here, that is going to be used as a way to get him from this position.

I just want to say to the member, bring forward a package of legislation. Let us sort out the problems, if there are problems. You know our commitment. You know our commitment to photo radar. You know, therefore, that we're prepared to get this legislation done. The interesting thing was done at the corner of Dufferin and St Clair showed incredible numbers: in 110 hours, 301 red light

Hon Mr Clement: I don't mean to be dramatic, but I get this legislation in place before more people are killed.

and myself more in agreement with the honourable member. I don't believe I raised privacy concerns. I believe those can be overcome provided it is done in a certain way.

The key issue for me, and evidently for the honorable member, is effectiveness, making sure that we have the tools necessary, using the technology, using other tools available to us to ensure that we identify that red-light-runner driver, the aggressive driver, issue the demerit points, jack up the insurance rate, target all our sanctions. If the honorable member and his caucus have some other, what I'll be an effective solution to this problem.

olutions in this regard — we are already accepting resolutions or proposals from the Ontario Safety League, from other organizations that care about getting at this problem — and if his caucus is willing to work with us, I think in the spirit of co-operation we can come to a solution. In fact, I'm sure we can.

HEALTH CARE FRAUD

Mr. Bill Grinnett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): My

question to the Minister of Health concerns health fraud, in which the police had accused an individual of overbilling the province's health system by some \$90,000. This is the kind of misuse that is very damaging to the health system. Those dollars should be spent on patient care and should not be wasted on fraud. As everyone knows, we're spending \$1.2 billion more now on health care than we did when we became the government and we want to make sure that this health fraud is kept to a

minimum. Can you explain to the House what initiatives your ministry is taking to combat health fraud?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): Our government has certainly moved forward. I think very aggressively, to ensure that all health care dollars are spent on health services for patients. We did initiate a 1-800 number. We also have a 1-800 number in place so that providers can validate health cards. Fortunately, as a result, what we see happening is that we are removing ineligible health cards from the system.

Probably one of the other very significant initiatives we have undertaken that is having a good impact is the fact that we now have a coordinator who is dealing with anti-fraud programs and has a staff to assist. We are doing everything possible to ensure that those people who are not entitled to health cards have those health cards removed. If people are fraudulently using the system, then certainly charges are being laid.

1500

Mr Grimmett: You've outlined a number of initiatives but I would like to hear more results. What tangible results is the ministry actually recognizing or achieving in combating health fraud? I wonder if you could outline to us some tangible results. It's fine to bring in programs, but are they working?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I'm very pleased to say that our programs are working. They are working extremely well. We have received, since the program was started in 1997, to the public health fraud action line approximately 1,558 calls. In the last five months alone we have received 928 reports of alleged fraud. All of these calls are thoroughly investigated, and I am very pleased to say that these investigations have resulted in ending eligibility for 42% of the cases. As well, the ministry has initiated 15 prosecutions of health fraud involving 35 charges. We have obtained three convictions, the balance are in the courts, and so far those three convictions have resulted in \$92,000 in restitution. That money is returned and it goes to help patients.

JAIL CLOSURES

Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall): My question is to the Solicitor General and it concerns the policy of jail closures in eastern Ontario. As the minister knows, I attended a meeting in Brockville last week where he announced that four eastern Ontario jails will be closed in favour of a mega-jail in his own riding. Among the facilities to be closed is a Cornwall jail, which will result in a loss of employment of possibly 40 employees in Cornwall and area. Let me tell you that 40 jobs in the Cornwall area is a very big hit. These workers have valuable experience in the correctional service and have been trained at the expense of the taxpayers.

While it has been hinted they may be offered employment at the mega-jail, there is a lot of uncertainty about their future. Will you guarantee that all classified employees working at a facility slated for closure will have full employment at the new Brockville centre? Will you

The Speaker: Answer.

Mr Conway: Whereas the old jail used to be in Pembroke, they're now going to find themselves two and three hours away from home and work. Minister, in light of the unfairness of the policy that would close the Pembroke Jail, will you now stand in your place and tell the rural residents of the Upper Ottawa Valley that their jail will remain open and —

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Hon Mr Runciman: I appreciate the member's concerns with respect to this. Any time there is a job loss in the community, we're all concerned. Certainly I've experienced that, as have many members in this Legislature.

What we are doing with respect to the restructuring process is addressing the call of the Provincial Auditor in two reports, talking about the very high-cost system of corrections in Ontario. We currently have the highest-cost provincial system in the country, significantly higher than in other provinces. We are making an effort, which the NDP initiated some time ago, to close out older, high-cost, inefficient and in many respects unsafe facilities. In the Pembroke situation it's a very old facility, as the member knows.

Mr Conway: Newly renovated.

Hon Mr Runciman: Newly renovated but still significant per diem costs to the province of Ontario and our taxpayers.

With respect to the transportation issue, I recognize that we have made a commitment with respect to transportation of prisoners.

The Speaker: Answer.

Hon Mr Runciman: New facilities will also have

facilities, which will provide an opportunity for reduced transportation requirements. I think we're —

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

Point of order, Minister.

Mr Conway: This policy will tell people —

The Speaker: Order. We have a point of order.

Mr Conway: — in Toronto that their neighbourhood jail is in Samia.

The Speaker: Member for Renfrew North, come to

order. I want you to come to order.

Mr Conway: This is a scandal. Absolutely unfair.

The Speaker: Member for Renfrew North, I'm not

going to warn you again.

Minister.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Inter-

governmental Affairs, minister responsible for

women's issues): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. In my

response to the leader of the third party with regard to the

restraining order —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. She's correcting her record from

a previous question. I think you'll want to hear it probably

and it will be very quick.

Point of order.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I think that the members of

the House would want to know that there have been

improvements to the restraining order process and I didn't

say that in response to my question with regard to the

integrated —

Mrs Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): That's not

correcting the record.

The Speaker: Hold it. Let's go to question period and

then maybe it would be more appropriate if you'd correct

your record after.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): My ques-

tion is to the Minister of Education and Training. Your reforms to the apprenticeship program are causing

concerns as it becomes clearer how bad your changes are

going to be to apprentices and to our economy.

Your legislation, Bill 55, creates new tuition fees,

eliminates important protections for workers, deregulates

and lowers wages. But I guess that's not much of a

surprise as it's part of your government's agenda, its race

to the bottom. When we ask your officials why you're

doing this, why you're scrapping these protections that

have existed in law for many years, we're told, "Wait

until you see the regulations."

Minister, we don't want to wait that long. Will you commit today to table the full apprenticeship regulations in this House before Bill 55 is called for second reading?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): We have come forward with the apprenticeship legislation, the first legislation, I might say, since 1964. That's how far out of date the apprenticeship legis-

lation is, and if you think back to the conditions in 1964 in 1998, obviously they're extremely different. We've gone through an extensive consultation with the stakeholders. The member opposite mentioned tuition fees, and I've already announced that tuition fees will not be included until we have completed negotiations with the federal government with regard to a labour market agreement. Then, at that point, there will also have to be financial assistance to those apprentices who need assistance going through the program.

Quite simply, there are many opportunities in our economy for apprentices, whether tool and die makers, hairdressers, cooks and bakers, any number of the skilled trades. Our apprenticeship system is rooted in the 1960s and needs to be brought up to date to offer people the

opportunities in the 1990s. **Mr Lessard:** Minister, part of bringing that legislation up to date requires you to have meaningful consultation with the people who are going to be affected by it. We know what you mean by consultation. It means meeting

but not listening. Today we have representatives from the OFL apprenticeship committee and from the buildings trades in the gallery: Sandra Clifford from the OFL, James Moffatt from the Sheet Metal Workers, Ron Groulx from the Boilermakers and John Maceroni from the Painters union. They have been trying to tell you that this legislation is going in the wrong direction. We even know some employers' groups that don't like what you're doing.

All we have, as far as what you're proposing in regulations, is this, A Framework for Revised Regulations, a one-page document. I ask you once again, Minister, will you commit to tabling the full regulations before you call

Bill 55 for second reading? **Hon David Johnson:** We have committed to consultations throughout this process. Indeed, some of the representatives whom you've announced here today have been an integral part of these consultations — the sheet

Metal Workers, the Ontario Federation of Labour. What we need to accomplish is to bring the apprenticeship system in tune with the 1990s as we approach the millennium, because there are just so many opportunities. We believe that through the reforms in this legislation and through giving more authority to the various trades and the pacts associated with the various industries we can double

the number of new apprentices coming into the system. We intend to carry on with this legislation, we intend to carry on with our consultations. We intend to bring forward a new piece of legislation and have it debated here, of course, which we've already announced, one that will encourage more people under current conditions to

Ontario.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

Mr Sean C. Conway (Rentrev North): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I file under standing order 37(a) my complete dissatisfaction with the response of the minister of corrections to my concern about the arbitrary and unfair closure of the Pembroke Jail, and I expect a late show at a conveniently early time.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: This is with regard to restraining orders and the question that I received from the leader of the third party. I don't think I was firm in saying that in fact the restraining order —

“The two hospitals, along with a representative from the community care access centre form a joint executive committee to build on existing alliances to ensure continuity of service to the patients and residents of Cornwall and surrounding areas during and after the restructuring of hospital services.”

“French-language services to be strengthened in both hospitals;

attached to a very old acute care facility.

site is a new complex continuing care hospital pavilion Cornwall. Basically, the configuration of the Hotel Dieu by the commission as a viable option for the taxpayers in

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): OK, but I need your point of order. What's your point of order?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: My point of order is that it was implied that the system isn't working and now I'm answering the question by saying that it is working —

The Speaker: I understand that, and that's probably a statement or a question or something, but I know what it's not; it's not a point of order.

PETITIONS

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall): I have a petition signed by about 100 residents from Cornwall and S-D-G.

"I support the commission's preliminary decision to restructure health services in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and Prescott and Russell counties which specifies that:

"The Cornwall General Hospital will be renovated in order to consolidate all acute (which includes all diagnostic testing, emergency and critical care services, obstetrics, paediatrics, surgery and acute medical), rehabilitation and mental health services in Cornwall, eliminating duplication of any unnecessary services between the CGH and the HDH.

"The Hotel Dieu Hospital will provide all complex continuing care and subacute care. This will allow it to build on its experience providing long-term care;

"The Cornwall General Hospital presents a better option for the delivery of acute services because of better layout and service relationship and recent renovation to emergency, critical care and operating rooms;

"All acute services will be provided in a public non-denominational setting that recognizes all individuals as equals regardless of race, creed or religion;

“\$15.2 million is required for renovation and expansion projects, furniture and equipment for the two hospitals; \$5.9 million for Hotel Dieu Hospital in Cornwall; \$9.3 million for Cornwall General Hospital.

ABORTION

Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded over 45,000 abortions in 1993 at an estimated cost of \$25 million; and

"Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury, or illness, and abortions are not therapeutic procedures; and

"Whereas the vast majority of abortions are done for reasons of convenience or finance; and

"Whereas the province has the exclusive authority to determine what services will be insured; and

I will affix my signature to these petitions.

"The Premier and the Minister of Health should immediately implement the April 18 resolution and strike a working committee to begin the task of setting realistic targets for the phase-out of persistent bio-accumulative environmental toxins."

three parties;
"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

of environmental toxins; and
"Whereas the Legislative Assembly on April 18, 1996, passed a resolution to that effect with support from all

through preventative measures; and "Whereas the Ontario Task Force on the Primary Prevention of Cancer has advised the government to set realistic and realizable targets for phasing out the release

excess of \$1 billion annually; and "Whereas the best way to fight cancer or any disease is

annually in Ontario alone; and "Whereas cancer treatment costs Ontario taxpayers in

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:
"Whereas cancer claims in excess of 20,000 lives

of signatures on petitions I've been collecting for months now. These are from CAW Local 1530 and CAW Local 636. They read:

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I have thousands

CANCER PREVENTION

community of service to the patients and residents of Cornwall and surrounding areas during and after the restructuring of hospital services."

"The two hospitals, along with a representative from the community care access centre form a joint executive committee to build on existing alliances to ensure

attached to a very old acute care facility. "French-language services to be strengthened in both hospitals;

"The commission stated that due to physical plant limitations, consolidation of all services (all acute and chronic care) at the Cornwall General site is not possible and the capital cost for the one-site option at Hotel Dieu is very high at \$25.6 million. This option was not considered by the commission as a viable option for the taxpayers in Cornwall. Basically, the configuration of the Hotel Dieu site is a new complex containing care hospital pavilion

"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require funding for elective procedures; and

"Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is in fact hazardous to women's health;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cease from providing any taxpayers' dollars for the performance of abortions."

They're signed by some 1,000 people from my riding.

HOSPITAL RESTRICTURING

Mr Alvin Curtling (Scarborough North): I have a petition seeking support from the members of Parliament. "I support the commission's preliminary decision to restructure health services in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and Prescott and Russell counties which specifies that:

"The Cornwall General Hospital will be renovated in order to consolidate all acute (which includes all diagnostic testing, emergency and critical care services, obstetrics, paediatrics, surgery and acute medical), rehabilitation and mental health services in Cornwall, eliminating duplication of any unnecessary services between the CGH and the HDH;

"The Hotel Dieu Hospital will provide all complex continuing care and subacute care. This will allow it to build on its experience providing long-term care;

"The Cornwall General Hospital presents a better option for the delivery of acute services because of better layout and service relationship and recent renovation to emergency, critical care and operating rooms;

"All acute services will be provided in a public non-demonstrational setting that recognizes all individuals as equals regardless of race, creed or religion;

"\$15.2 million is required for renovation and expansion projects, furniture and equipment for the two hospitals: \$5.9 million for Hotel Dieu Hospital in Cornwall; \$9.3 million for Cornwall General Hospital.

"The commission stated that due to physical plant limitation, consolidation of all services (all acute and chronic care) at the Cornwall General site is not possible and the capital cost for the one-site option at Hotel Dieu is very high at \$25.6 million. This option was not considered by the commission as a viable option for the taxpayers in Cornwall. Basically, the configuration of the Hotel Dieu site is a new complex containing care hospital pavilion attached to a very old acute care facility.

"French-language services to be strengthened in both hospitals;

"The two hospitals, along with a representative from the community care access centre form a joint executive committee to build on existing alliances to ensure continuity of service to the patients and residents of Cornwall and surrounding areas during and after the restructuring of hospital services."

I affix my signature, in full agreement with the petition.

ABORTION

Mr Bob Wood (London South): I have a petition signed by 117 people.

"Whereas the health system is overburdened and unnecessary spending must be cut; and

"Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury or illness and abortions are not therapeutic procedures; and

"Whereas the vast majority of abortions are done for reasons of convenience or finance; and

"Whereas the province has exclusive authority to determine what services will be insured; and

"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require funding for elective procedures; and

"Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is in fact hazardous to women's health; and

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded over 45,000 abortions in 1993 at an estimated cost of \$25 million;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cease from providing any taxpayers' dollars for the performance of abortions."

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cease from providing any taxpayers' dollars for the performance of abortions."

DIABETES EDUCATION SERVICES

Mr Frank Michash (Kenora): I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Diabetes Education Service in Kenora is a necessary program; and

"Whereas the Harts government has refused to provide long-term funding for diabetes education in Kenora; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has acknowledged that the program is cost-effective given the volume of clients seen and the degree of specialization required;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, join our MPP, Frank Michash, in calling upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the Harts government provide long-term, stable funding to the Diabetes Education Service in Kenora."

I too have affixed my signature to the petition.

ABORTION

Mrs Barbara Fisher (Bruce): I have petitions here today from Mildmay, Teeswater, Walkerton and Formosa.

The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded over 45,000 abortions in 1993 at an estimated cost of \$25 million; and

"Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury, or illness, and abortions are not therapeutic procedures; and

"Whereas the vast majority of abortions are done for reasons of convenience or finance; and

"Whereas the province has the exclusive authority to determine what services will be insured; and

"Whereas pharmacists in Ontario are often pressured to dispense and/or sell chemicals and/or devices contrary to their moral or religious beliefs..."

And it ends with:

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

I added my signature to it.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislature. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the current electoral system allows for large majority governments to be elected in the Ontario Legislature with the support of less than 50% of the voters; and

"Whereas in a democratic election voters should be free to vote for the candidate who best represents them; and

"Whereas every voter casts only one vote, and every vote cast, whether for the winner of a constituency or not, should count to elect a member of the provincial Parliament; and

"Whereas voters have the right to fair representation in the Legislature;

"Whereas modern democracies from New Zealand to Germany to Japan have adopted a mixed-member proportional electoral system; and

"Whereas with the new redistribution of boundaries in Ontario the number of MPPs will be reduced from 130 to 103;

"We respectfully request that the Ontario Election Act be modified so that the residual votes in each constituency (ie the votes not used to elect the winner of that constituency) be accumulated with the residual votes in all other constituencies and used to elect an additional 26 MPPs. They would be selected from published party lists, in proportion to the total number of residual votes for each political party."

It's signed by a number of my constituents from the Rockwood area.

DENTAL CARE

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads like this:

"Whereas a new schedule of dental services for children and people with disabilities was introduced by the government under the Ontario Works Act and the Ontario Disability Support Program Act; and

"Whereas the new schedule fails to meet the special needs of children and people with disabilities, reduces services, places barriers to accessing care and creates an

"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require funding for elective procedures; and

"Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is in fact hazardous to women's health;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cease from providing any taxpayers' dollars for the performance of abortions."

I have signed my name to the top of each of the petitions.

DIABETES EDUCATION SERVICES

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): I have a petition here:

"To the Legislative Assembly:

"Whereas the Diabetes Education Service at Lake of the Woods District Hospital in Kenora, Ontario, is an essential component of health care, we, the undersigned, petition the Minister of Health of Ontario as follows:

"For permanent funding for the diabetes education service."

I affix my signature in full agreement with this petition.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr Tom Skarica (Wentworth North): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads in part:

"Whereas the town of Flamborough has placed \$639,000 of a \$1.354-million provincial grant into the Borer's Creek reserve fund;

"Whereas the town of Flamborough's diversion of \$639,000 into a Borer's Creek fund will result in an approximate 5.71% property tax increase;

"Whereas the town of Flamborough, by returning the said \$639,000 to the Flamborough property taxpayers as intended by the province, will result in an approximate 5% property tax decrease;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To take the steps necessary to ensure that the \$1.354-million grant paid by the province of Ontario to the town of Flamborough be applied for the purposes it was intended for, thereby ensuring that the residents of Flamborough not be subjected to unfair property tax increases."

I have over 200 names signed on this petition, and I add my signature to it.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr Dave Boushy (Sarnia): I have a petition from my riding signed by 100 people. It starts:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas nurses in Ontario often experience coercion to participate in practices which directly contravene their deeply held ethical standards; and

environment for various different dental programs across Ontario; and

"Whereas the move away from an emphasis on prevention under the new dental schedule brings significant health risks for children and people with disabilities who are often least able to practise good oral hygiene; and

"Whereas the new dental schedule interferes with the patients' rights to consent to treatment by requiring administrators, and not patients or substitute decision-makers, to authorize and deny dental treatment; and

"Whereas there is no method for the patient to appeal a decision by a plan administrator to deny dental treatment; and

"Whereas pre-authorizations, called predeterminations in the new plan, will require that a higher level of confidential patient health information be disclosed to dental plan administrators; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has caused confusion among patients by introducing the plan without prior consultation" — typical — "and has not included any affected patient groups in consultations after releasing the new dental plan;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Delay full implementation of the new dental plan until the requirement for predeterminations is removed, patient confidentiality is protected, the plan emphasizes prevention in oral health care, and the government consults directly with affected patients to ensure the new plan will meet the special needs of children and people with disabilities."

I affix my signature as I'm in total agreement with it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INSTRUCTION TIME: MINIMUM STANDARDS ACT, 1998 LOI DE 1998 SUR LES HEURES D'ENSEIGNEMENT : NORMES MINIMALES

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 63, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to instructional time / Projet de loi 63, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne les heures d'enseignement.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted, I was talking about the Tory math and how we are trying to do an equation that just doesn't work, because the Tory funding figures are such that it means the number of students in classes, the number of minutes of instruction, cannot be worked out according to what the government continues to say.

Under the so-called Mike's math lesson, 24 minutes per day equals 25 more students per day. Also according to Tory math, 22 equals 30 or 31 or 32 or 33. I'll explain this in this way: You have to understand that the numbers

"I wish to thank you for your efforts to inform the secondary school teacher. He says: me from Michael Wingrove of Hamilton. He's a problem with Tory mathematics. This one is addressed to just want to refer to a couple of these e-mails to demonstrate probably better than I could myself the received some e-mails. I've been receiving a lot of them. I After the presentation I made in the House yesterday, I it means 25 extra students at least.

After the presentation I made in the House yesterday, I it means 25 extra students at least. 22 doesn't really mean 22 for the Tories when it comes to say that because, as I was explaining yesterday afternoon, or in their English class this semester. In most cases they will find it exceeds 22 at the secondary level. They will

I suggest that every parent in Ontario should ask their children how many children they have in their math class and in their English class this semester. In most cases they will find it exceeds 22 at the secondary level. They will say that because, as I was explaining yesterday afternoon, 22 doesn't really mean 22 for the Tories when it comes to the size of classes, and 25 doesn't mean 25 extra minutes, it means 25 extra students at least.

I suggest that every parent in Ontario should ask their children how many children they have in their math class and in their English class this semester. In most cases they will find it exceeds 22 at the secondary level. They will say that because, as I was explaining yesterday afternoon, 22 doesn't really mean 22 for the Tories when it comes to the size of classes, and 25 doesn't mean 25 extra minutes, it means 25 extra students at least.

In regard to the number 22, Tories have been told always to refer to capping class sizes and never, ever to use the word "average" when talking about smaller classes. Of course, we all know that the class size of 22 refers to a board-wide average which includes all staff, not just the classroom teachers. In most schools, classes are the same size or larger than last year, not smaller. The only way to reduce class size is to establish a maximum in each class, but the government hasn't done that and doesn't want to do that.

I suggest that every parent in Ontario should ask their children how many children they have in their math class and in their English class this semester. In most cases they will find it exceeds 22 at the secondary level. They will say that because, as I was explaining yesterday afternoon, 22 doesn't really mean 22 for the Tories when it comes to the size of classes, and 25 doesn't mean 25 extra minutes, it means 25 extra students at least.

Teachers, as many people may know, have offered to lengthen classes so that each student could have more time in each class. The Tories, however, have rejected this idea because it means they would not be able to get rid of teachers. They don't want teachers to have longer classes and thus have more instructional time based on longer classes, even though that would mean each teacher has more time with the students. They want to cut the number of teachers, so the Tories want each teacher to have 25 more students, not 25 more minutes. They want them to have an extra period with more students, and as we've been saying throughout this piece, teachers need more time with the students they presently teach; they don't need more students to teach.

22 and 25 are very flexible in the Tory mind. They expand. People have been told that teachers are only being asked to teach an extra 25 minutes per day. They're also being asked to believe that every class in every high school in Ontario has 22 students. This is how the Tories have been told to express their arithmetic. Tories have been told to insist that 25 extra minutes a day is really little to ask a teacher. They're not to explain, however, that 25 doesn't really mean 25 minutes or to explain how

savings." But in any case, in two years "I escape this say, money, money, money, and damn those that stand in the way. At least the riot squad was not turned on our striking ranks as happened to Ontario's civil servants" under this government.

I think those comments attest to the poor morale that certainly Mr Wingrove in Hamilton demonstrates.

I have another letter that is from one of Mr Johnson's, the Minister of Education's, constituents. He says: "As one of your constituents and a secondary school teacher, I wish to protest in the strongest possible terms with regard to teacher working hours. The ad contains a vicious anti-teacher message, laden with half-truths (now I know what became of Joe McCartney). To compare 'teaching time' between provinces is a matter of interpretation. What is counted in other provinces is not counted here in Ontario."

That's quite true. The definition of "instructional time" as set out in this bill is quite different from the definitions used for "instructional time" in most of the other provinces. They are all different. So we're in many cases comparing apples and oranges when we try to argue that one province has more instructional minutes per week than another province. In many cases, other provinces do count mentoring, teachers being on call, hall duty, cafeteria duty and so on. Some provinces do, some provinces don't. The minister of course doesn't mention that when he makes statements and it certainly isn't mentioned in the advertisement that this Mr Roberts of Toronto is referring to.

1540

"In the ad it mentions the extra time involved as 25 minutes per day. This is poor math. Given the usual 70-minute period, 'the true figure is 35 minutes' extra per day. On top of this there is the time required to prepare, mark and mentor one extra class — perhaps one to one and a half hours. I am not convinced that you or anyone in your ministry has any concept of what is involved in teaching."

"The ad blatantly infers that teachers are not willing to put in more class time. This is a downright lie. Most teachers are quite willing to be in class the extra time if the seventh period," which boards have been asked to implement, "is dropped and our preparation time is restored. Your ministry has boasted about increasing the time teachers are in class without mentioning that it involves taking on an extra 25 to 30 students. The net result is that we have less time for each individual. Give us six classes and a return to preparation time and we will be better able to serve the students."

"By now the public has realized that there was fine print attached to the government's 'promise of 22 students per class. Perhaps you would be willing to explain to the parents of my students why I'm teaching 20 to 25 more students this year and thus have less time for their child?"

The government talks "of putting money into the classroom but is spending millions of dollars on publicity

As I was saying yesterday, in other semestered systems but that's the scheduling in a semestered system. I would say 10 in the morning is a little early for lunch, which range from 10 in the morning to 12:30. As an aside, sized cafeteria." There are three different lunchtimes, limited number of classrooms and into the inadequately semestered system. This is "to allow the kids to fit into the day," rather than the four-period day that I referred to in a

"In my case," Mr Wingrove says, "for the next semester that means that I teach one class at the start of the day and am forced to have lunch before 10 in the morning and then deal with three other classes" in a row "in three different classrooms in three different subject areas. The three-minute travelling time between classes would hardly allow a washroom trip, somewhat reminiscent of sweat shops around the world."

Another teacher he is acquainted with in a different school is now forced to teach two periods in two different schools with his "lunch hour" in between used to drive to the other school.

"It would seem that with the government insistence on 1,250 minutes the only acceptable humanitarian solution would be to revert back to a non-semestered school timetable."

This is what I suggested when the former minister first suggested this number of minutes per week, that it would mean the end of the semestered system at the secondary level. School boards would have to go back to the eight-period day. But Mr Wingrove raises a very important point about why that is not possible in many cases.

He says: "There wouldn't be enough room to house all the students" in many schools "in an eight-period day," because the student population is transient. "The semestered school allows an easier transition from school to school following family breakdowns or relocation due to downsizing. The non-semestered school usually results in the loss of a full year of credits if these students enter midway." What he's saying is that if you have a semestered system, a student can start in the middle of the year and get half of his credits, whereas in a non-semestered system in many cases that student would lose the full year.

Something else Mr Wingrove says speaks to the concern I raised about the morale in the school system. He says: "I am truly glad that the government saw fit to cancel payments to the teachers' pension fund to allow low teachers to retire earlier, and even here the agenda was clouded," because it means they want to retire older teachers at maximum pay to hire rookies at less pay, "for a significant

and 'photo ops',... Boards... spend \$73 million on severance packages and 'golden handshakes' (none of which went to teachers). At the same time teachers and schools spend hours trying to beg and borrow from each other to have enough texts" in each class. "Instead of a 'photo op', spend a day in a school to see what your government has created...."

"Your reforms to education are a mirage financed on the backs of those you profess to care about: the students."

I think that very eloquently expresses the view that many teachers across Ontario have about this government. The bill sets minimum standards for the number of minutes teachers are to spend teaching. When I say it's about getting rid of teachers, I have the evidence. I have a survey now of the public boards. It doesn't include the Catholic boards; it's just the public boards at the secondary level.

There are 32 boards. Of the 32 boards, only in one has the number of teachers remained the same this year and only in one has the number of students remained the same.

That's not surprising. In 20 of the 32 boards there are more students this year than there were last year. Eleven boards lost students; they have fewer students this year than last year. But in 20 they have an increase in the number of students. Logically that would mean if you have more students in a board you will need more teachers, all other things being equal. But when we look at the numbers of teachers — as I said, one stayed the same — only five of the boards, the 32 public district school boards in Ontario, this year have more teachers. Twenty-six of the 32 public boards have fewer teachers this year. It doesn't take a lot of math expertise to figure this out. There are more students and there are fewer teachers, so that means each individual teacher has less time with each individual student.

In 1998-99 in Ontario there are 1,563 fewer teachers at the secondary level and yet in 1998-99 there are 5,631 more students at the secondary level in the public boards. So we have 5,600 more students in Ontario's public schools at the secondary level and we have over 1,500 fewer teachers. Can anyone have any doubt that Bill 160 and the funding formula and the demand for more instructional minutes per week per teacher is not anything about improving the quality of education for these 5,600 more students in Ontario? It's about having fewer teachers. It has achieved its aim. It has worked. We haven't dealt with the Catholic boards; this is just a survey of the public boards.

The whole purpose of this seven out of eight — or in some cases it's been suggested perhaps six and a half out of eight, depending on how the boards organize the schools so you can teach half a class. One teacher might teach the first half of the year or the first half of the semester and then another teacher would take over and educationally. It doesn't make much sense for the students to have one teacher for half of the course and another teacher for the other half, but that's been suggested in some cases. The total number of minutes does work out

just ask any student who has been in a class of 33 or 35 there as well. I don't have the final numbers yet. Teachers. There are fewer teachers teaching more students not have a commensurate increase in the number of will find that the increase in the number of students does received more funding. But even on the Catholic side you don't have a survey of those boards because some of them I may not be quite as severe on the Catholic side. I achieved, and it's worked.

that way. But it doesn't work out for the quality of education for students. This is about ensuring the government's agenda to have fewer teachers in the system is achieved, and it's worked.

This is a government that says it wants to improve the quality of education for students, but the funding formula believes that. It isn't possible. Boards of trustees are in a no-win situation here. The government has cut the funds available for teaching in the classroom, but it goes around saying, "We've increased it."

The government has said that boards will no longer be able to raise any funds locally. The government will set the funds, determine the funds that are available to boards for instruction. The government at the same time says it wants boards to meet an average class size — not a maximum but an average class size. In many cases, in order to do that the boards need more teachers but the funding formula requires them to have fewer teachers. That's not surprising. In any service, whether it be education, health care or any other service, most of the budget goes to staff. Most of it goes to salaries. In teaching it's about 70% of the budget. If the government is going to take a lot of money out, between \$750 million and \$1.1 billion a year out of education, the only way it can be done is by having fewer teachers.

When it appeared to the government that boards might not do that, they might not cut enough teachers, then the Conservative government decided, "We've got to ensure they do." The way they did it was by coming up with this increase in the number of instructional minutes and requiring boards to comply. As I said in one of the examples I read, in some cases teachers said: "We're prepared to teach longer to comply with the number of minutes required. The way to do it is to lengthen the time with our students, and at the end of each week we'll have taught more minutes with the students." But the government came along and said to the boards: "No, you can't do that. We don't want you to do that." Mr. Johnson, the Minister of Education and Training, sent a letter out to the boards saying: "Oh, no, we don't want you to do that. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about having teachers teach more periods — not more minutes

per period, more periods. That means of course that we want each teacher teaching another 25 or so students each day."

In industry it's what's called speed-up, where you require employees to do more in the same amount of time out of week. Instead of saying, "You can still teach three in of four, but they'll be 75-minute periods each and so that'll make up the time," the government said: "No, no, that's not what we want. We want you to teach four out of four and keep the periods at the same length." In some cases, they actually reduced the period length to come up with the right number. That hasn't happened in very many cases but it has happened in a few. So it's been all about reducing the number of teachers.

Some of these boards that I've referred to in the survey — I'll give you an example here. I'll use the board in my own area, the Algoma district board. They have gone up 82 students this year, total. No, sorry, I'll use the Rainbow District School Board, which is the Sudbury-Espanola area. They've gone up 82 students but they've gone down in the number of teachers, and that has happened right across the board. I don't understand —

Interjection

Mr Wildman: Well, let's see here. It's a little unclear on this. I'll use the Near North District School Board in this example here. The Near North has actually gone down a number of students; 218 students fewer and they've gone down 35 teachers. Let's take Waterloo as an example. It's gone up 450 students and it's gone down 57 teachers. That's the kind of thing that's happening. That's what's been happening across Ontario because of this funding formula.

The reason for this bill is that some of the boards and the teachers' federations — not very many, but a few of them — negotiated agreements which allowed for the number of minutes to be met without cutting teachers. The government, to be fair, has said, "If they've made agreements, we will allow those agreements to go on for another two years, but after that they can't be extended." But they brought in this legislation to ensure there couldn't be any —

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Thank you. Questions or comments?

Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock): I would like to comment on some of the comments that the member for Algoma made. Primarily this bill, as has already been mentioned, is about defining what the instructional time will be. We debated that quite a bit last year under Bill 160. I really feel that the debate now, and why we have to bring this bill forward, is because there's a disagreement on the whole aspect of primarily the secondary school teachers, who do not want to teach the extra 25 minutes per day.

I understand that. I understand that when you change something it's difficult to accept that change. Certainly when you're in disagreement with it, when you weren't teaching the 25 minutes extra, of course you don't like it. But it's part and parcel of what we as the government feel is the package of increasing the quality of education.

at them at great speed.

I have to remind the member for Algoma, as has been brought to my attention as well by a good number of our younger teachers, that they are still suffering the consequences of what was called the social contract and how that took \$425 million out of the system by the former NDP government. That was made permanent by this government. I'm hearing a lot of frustration as well that has carried over from the days of the social contract, from younger teachers and from teachers who are new in the system. As we speak about the numbers game, I encourage members from all parties to get out to just feel the frustration in our education system today.

1600

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I want to commend the member for Algoma and the comments he has put on the record these last couple of days regarding this piece of work put before us by the government, obviously an attempt by them to regain some control over the chaos and confusion and very difficult situation that we in this province find ourselves in today where it concerns education, and education for those most vulnerable in our system, elementary and secondary school students, some of my own children.

He speaks very eloquently from his own experience of having been a teacher in the system, his own experience of students still in the system and having spent a lot of time, an extraordinary amount of time over the last number of months, speaking to teachers and teachers' groups and

parents and parents' groups and communities about this issue and about this situation. Some of us predicted that this was where we were going to find ourselves at this time in our history, as we looked at the chaos, the crisis that was predicted by the Minister of Education a few years ago that they were going to cause in the system. This isn't about bettering the system, this isn't about improving education, this is very simply and clearly about reducing the number of teachers in the system. It's about control and power and it's about taking money out of the system. When you do that, not to expect that you will end up in the place where we are today is to be naive and foolish at best. This piece of work that we are dealing with here today is major damage control, nothing more and nothing less.

Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex): I'm pleased to comment on the comments of my colleague the member for Algonia. I've spent a lot of time with the member for Algonia as education critic. I certainly appreciate the passionate perspective he brings to education. I find myself in fundamental disagreement with his perspective and comments today, as he might appreciate.

The objective is not to attack teachers in this province; it's simply not that. We're looking to a rejuvenated education system in this province where teachers have a greater sense of ownership. They have greater opportunity to participate in the development of areas of specialty where they can bring an academic perspective to curriculum and province-wide testing. Those are the skills sets that the government of Ontario requires and in fact has solicited over the course of the past three years in terms of developing a new agenda for education in this province.

This government is the first government to take specific action in terms of the issue of class size which the member for Algonia spoke to for some length both today and yesterday. We've taken specific action in terms of capping that average class size and not only doing that from a policy perspective; we've also provided the necessary tools to implement that policy decision. The tools I'm speaking of are in the form of some \$1.2 billion in a class size protection fund. Over a three-year period that equates to some 3,000 new teaching positions in this province.

Not only are we making the broader policy decisions that are necessary to reform the education system in this province, but we're providing the necessary investments to deliver on those policies in our classrooms. It's about putting more money into the classrooms, putting more money into the resources that teachers need to deliver those services to our students so that we have an education system that's designed and prepared to serve our students into the future.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Algonia, two minutes.

Mr Wildman: I thank the members for their comments. I'd just like to make a couple of comments in reply. This bill, the son of Bill 62, or daughter of Bill 62, is about control. It's about centralization of control over education in the hands of the minister. It's about micromanaging the system centrally. It's about taking

away flexibility for local boards and for teachers and for administrators to organize the schools. It's about ensuring that there are fewer teachers in the system. It's about saving money by having fewer teachers. It's about taking a billion dollars out of the system.

It's not about quality of education. It's not about improving the number of hours that students are taught. It's not about ensuring there's more contact between individual students and teachers. It's about ensuring that there are fewer teachers teaching more students. It's about students who need extra help not getting it.

It doesn't even deal with a proper definition. It doesn't mention things like library teachers or guidance teachers. It doesn't define how they're supposed to make up the 1,250 minutes. In Quebec the definition does. The definition there is that they are instructing as long as they are doing things that are in the students' timetable that allow them to gain credits. This doesn't.

Does this mean an end to guidance in Ontario schools? Does it mean an end to library? It doesn't tell us here in this bill. I'll tell you what it does mean. It means less help for students, less instruction for students and fewer extracurricular activities for students.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Hon David Turbull (Minister without Portfolio):

I'm pleased to join this debate. The debate today is on Bill 63, which deals with instructional time. There are some broader questions which are being raised by the opposition that we have to consider.

Prior to the last election, I think probably the largest public meeting I ever held was in York Mills Collegiate. It was as we rolled out the document from our party called A Blueprint for Learning and it was a discussion piece on what needs to be done in education. The most people that ever turned out to a public meeting in the York Mills riding were at that one and there were some pretty strong views.

Like anything one would debate, not everybody agrees, but it was quite clear there was a very common thread that the parents were expressing. The thread was that they wanted to make sure there was a concentration on preparing their children for the rigours of future education challenges and that they needed the money to be spent in the classrooms. It has always been a common theme of people being disgusted at the amount of money which is spent by school boards in non-classroom activities.

One only has to visit the school board offices around the province in most school board administrations and examine the quality of construction and decoration and furniture in school board offices and then compare that with the many, many portables and relocatable classrooms that exist around this province. This is a problem that has existed for a long time in this province. It's something which certainly existed throughout all of the period of the last two governments and in fact back to the time that our government was in power before. There is a need to spend the money where the rubber hits the road, and that is in the classroom.

We know that we have good, dedicated teachers. There isn't a single member of this Legislature who doesn't have some friend or relation or colleague who is a teacher. We know that the vast majority of teachers have gone into teaching for all the best reasons. They want the joy of seeing children educated and ready for the future, a future which is very challenging in the world today, but also a future where Ontario has somewhat missed the boat. In the last few years we have been coming fairly low on the totem pole in terms of achievement, measured against other provinces in Canada and against other administrations in the world. Given the amount of money that is spent in our education system, this is clearly not acceptable.

1610

It's a problem that our government in opposition declared it was prepared to come to terms with and we laid out some of the pathway we intended to go. Indeed, since we have become the government, we have worked away with various pieces of legislation to make sure that the money is spent in the classroom. We have spent money on making sure that we have developed a new, more rigorous curriculum which applies to all schools in Ontario. We have developed province-wide testing and we have developed easily understood report cards that parents can look at and understand where their child is going and if any remediation is necessary.

We have brought in, in previous legislation, in Bill 160, finally a capping on what the average class size of a school board should be. It's worth spending a moment on this because I have heard some ridiculous statements made about average class sizes. Of course, quite obviously, when you take an average across the board it doesn't mean that every class is going to be that size. We have left that responsibility in the hands of boards, and there are reasons that a local board may elect to have some classes larger and some classes smaller. But when you take the average class size that existed before we became the government, before we passed this legislation, they were mainly higher all across the province.

I will speak specifically to the Toronto public secondary schools. The average class size in Toronto is 23.5. That was before we passed any legislation. It was 23.5, students, very close to the average we are aiming for, but still higher than that which we have set for secondary schools, and that is 22 students on average. We allow the schools to determine based upon the amount of population in a given area and the kind of demands that are placed on schools in terms of certain classes that you're not going to have a lot of students in and that will automatically squeeze up some classes to a larger size.

In considering this, I would consider my own local high school, which is York Mills public school, which is 28.5 students at the moment. Yes, they're facing some challenges in terms of accommodating the students in new, smaller classes. The Toronto public school board has indicated to them that they want York Mills Collegiate to reduce its average class size down to the size of the

average that existed before this legislation came through, namely, 23.5 students.

Now they point out that there are many portables. I've lived in my present house for 21 years, and as long as I can remember there have been portables in the back of this school. Yet we have a situation in the Toronto school board that 100 schools are not being used for the education of children. These are facilities that, if liquidated, could yield large amounts of money to be able to build the additions to schools that we need. It is urgently needed, but it has been swept under the carpet for so long. We have gobs and gobs of money being spent in administration in school boards, and our government has now said: "No, you're going to be directed as to what amount is going to go into the classroom. It cannot be left at a certain amount." They can take money from administration and put it into the classroom, but they cannot do the opposite.

We are spending money on new textbooks. This year we're investing an extra \$100 million on new textbooks. Will that buy all the textbooks we need? Of course it won't, but the fact is within the new funding formula there is an amount of money for textbooks each and every year, but initially there's this infusion of extra money for textbooks, which is very important because everybody who's in politics across the province knows the story that has existed for years in this province of children having to share textbooks or coming home with raggedy textbooks held together with Scotch Tape. That's not acceptable. In a rich province such as Ontario we have to be spending money where it matters, and that is with our children, not on lavish school board offices.

We have committed, as a government, to spending more resources on computers and software and Internet connections, and we're also spending more money and increasing the amount of money available for student tutors to help children who are having some challenges with their education. We should do no less.

Going back just for a moment to finish on the subject of classroom sizes, clearly we are not asking school boards to make every single secondary school class 22 and every single elementary class 25, but that is the average across the board. Discretion lies in the boards as to how they arrange that. But mathematics simply tells you that if you reduce the average of class sizes in a school board, need- less to say, class sizes overall are going to be reduced. That has to be good for our children.

Teachers have asked for smaller class sizes for a long time, although I was disappointed to hear Marshall Jarvis a couple of weeks ago indicating that he wanted the flexibility that average class sizes across school boards should be increased so it could be used for pay for the teachers. We don't begrudge any pay for the teachers. There is enough money in the funding formula for teachers. But very clearly, as to school boards that have got a heavy administration, where there are all kinds of people in the board offices who I suspect probably were teachers before — the majority of them were — maybe they don't have the same luxury of having such heavy

administrations in the future. That's good because we're going to spend the money where our children receive the benefit of it.

As a government and across the province we're spending more money on education than ever before in the history of this province. It's strange to say when you consider the horror stories that are being told by the opposition. No, we're not allowing the school boards to spend it in those areas outside the classroom that they've been able to get away with for so long.

We have protected within the funding formula the need for special education. Within the basic funding formula model, there's an amount on a per capita basis for all schools for special education, and then there are extra-special needs which are accounted for separately in a sliding scale according to the needs of that individual student. For the first time, that is an amount of money which is now portable. As that student moves to another school board, that money will be available automatically in the other school board. This makes good sense because this addresses the needs of the students with those special needs.

The instructional time that this bill addresses is as follows. The Education Improvement Commission, which is chaired by David Cooke, a former Minister of Education in an NDP government, and Ann Vanstone, a former chairman of the Metro public school board, has made recommendations. They have suggested that the amount of hours that teachers should spend in front of students, teaching classes, should be raised. At the moment the average across Ontario for secondary school teachers is 3.75 hours per day. Look, nobody likes working longer hours. Teachers are hard-working people and we're not suggesting for one instant that the teachers are scratching and not doing anything the rest of the time. Let us be very clear in this debate that that is not the suggestion.

1620

Mr Wildman: The suggestion is you want fewer teachers. **Hon Mr Turnbull:** My dear friend from across the floor in the NDP caucus is suggesting we want fewer teachers. No, indeed not.

Mr Wildman: That's the result.

Hon Mr Turnbull: What we want is to make sure money is spent where the children are, and that means more instructional time. The longer the teacher is in front of the student, we know the better chance we're going to have smaller class sizes. Smaller class sizes equate, and we've been told this over and over again, to better-quality education. That is the thrust of our educational reforms.

I've said cannot in any way be suggested to be a partisan gathering, has indicated that we should ask teachers in the secondary level to teach 1,250 minutes per week and in the elementary level to teach 1,300 minutes per week. What does this mean? For elementary teachers, it means exactly the same four hours and 20 minutes they've been teaching. They are at the national average and there is no problem in that area. But with secondary school teachers

classroom. The reason for this debate today is we are defining — and we thought it was absolutely self-evident when we brought in Bill 160 — what instructional time means. It does not mean hall monitoring. It does not mean cafeteria duty. That isn't instructional time. They are important activities and we're not belittling those, but we ask that the teachers be in front of the students four hours and 10 minutes per day on average so that each secondary school teacher will teach 1,250 minutes per week and each elementary school teacher 1,300 minutes per week.

Let us say clearly that there has been a lot of ill will created at a time when clearly unions have an axe to grind and are trying to get the very best deal for their members. That is the task of unions. Obviously our friends in the opposition are doing what Winston Churchill once said the

Mr Wildman: That's right and he did it well.

Hon Mr Turnbull: He did it well, and you're doing it well and we salute you for it.

But the fact is, we are not asking an extraordinary burden of teachers. Teachers work hard. We're asking them to work for four hours and 10 minutes per day on average in the secondary schools. That is 25 minutes more. I respect the fact that it's very hard to change. In all restructuring of corporations there is always a certain resentment at change. I suppose in all of us there is a reluctance to change, and that's natural. It's partly self-protection.

But what we want to do is concentrate on what I believe all generous-minded people want, and that is to teach our children so that they're ready for the rigours of the future, a future which is increasingly better because of the changes our government has made. We've seen the jobs coming to this province, but there is alarm at the fact that in the industrial sector they're saying, "We're worried that we will not have enough people to fill those high-tech jobs." We must make sure the students are ready for university and college and all other training. That's the challenge we face.

I personally reach out to teachers. I know teachers are hard-working, decent people who want to get on with what they were trained for, and that was to teach our children. I think if we cool the debate down a little bit, we can get on with that challenge.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

said, "No, we want you to teach more classes." That's what this definition in this bill is about, to ensure that the teachers are teaching more classes, and that means fewer teachers for students. It doesn't mean more time for individual students with individual teachers, it means less, because the extra 25 is not an extra 25 minutes, the extra 25 is an extra 25 students per day per teacher. That's what the 25 really is. It's not minutes, it's students, an additional 25 students per day. Some might say, "All right, let them teach another class. That's not so bad. They should be able to do that." Perhaps, but don't pretend it means more time for individual students with individual teachers. It doesn't; it means less.

1630

Mr Smith: I'm certainly pleased to comment briefly on the comments of my colleague from York Mills. He brought to the Legislature today a very reasoned position, one that clearly demonstrated his understanding of educational issues, both from a localized perspective and from a district or board-wide perspective, as he made references to schools, both elementary and secondary, within his own community.

He emphasized in my mind the need for change in terms of the education system in this province. He emphasized the historical inequities in situations that have arisen over the course of a number of years that quite frankly have gone unchallenged, the difference being that this government is prepared to accept those challenges and move the education system forward. The member articulated that in his comments.

He, as I do, shares the same common point of view in terms of the talents and abilities that the teachers of this province bring to the classroom each and every day. I think that's a very significant issue as this government continues to include them in the academic affairs that are important, where their expertise and specialties can be utilized, whether it's in curriculum development, the testing of provincial standards or in the areas of curriculum materials.

He talked about the flexibilities that have been built into the class size formula through the funding formula and the ability of principals and boards to make decisions that are relevant to their communities and relevant to their particular schools.

He talked about the importance of providing investment tools and made reference to the textbook investments and the need to support the major policy decisions the government makes, not simply with idle words but with the financial necessities that are needed to bring to realization those very important lessons for our students. Most important, he emphasized that we're not asking for extraordinary change here. He has put that as a significant reference to the need for a new vision for education in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Response, the member for York Mills.

Hon Mr Turnbull: I thank my colleagues from Kenora, Algoma and Midland for making their comments. We know that politics is a blood sport. We all

minutes per class to make up the time but the government Teachers indicated they were prepared to teach more

the problem. so much that it's more time but it's more students. That's cases it's only 35, but in no cases is it 25. The fact is not really is 70 to 75 minutes more in most cases. In some that the 25 minutes is mythical. It doesn't really work. It in previous interventions in this debate we've shown

day. In job and is just asking them to teach 25 more minutes a teachers are good, dedicated, that they're afraid of change perhaps but the government wants teachers to do a good teachers' position in his arguments: the argument that measured tones he used to try and put forward the York Mills and his presentation and I noticed the

Mr Wildman: I listened carefully to the member for students. The member for York Mills must realize that articles such as this in the Toronto Star today, are the there, the people who suffer the most, as we read in with the system. When you take a look at the frustrated people on the front line, the people who are so frustrated I travel into our schools in the northwest, as I talk to the stories that I'm making up. These are things that I hear as I often refer to what I'm hearing. They're not horror You suggest that the opposition is telling horror stories.

the schools. that I'm hearing, the frustration that we hear as we go into reading on a daily basis in the newspapers, the comments that is reflecting in terms of the comments that we're through to the teachers, the people on the front line, and the ill will creation will just continue. You're not getting down-loaded with many more things that you talked about, from the students — total frustration out there. As they get administration, I've heard it from trustees, I've heard it heard it from the teachers, I've heard it from the students as well. I've heard it from many of them. I've It's not just the teachers in the classrooms; it's the about your colleagues in government."

as education minister and feels pretty much the same "He says he's not very happy with the job you've done "Dave Johnson, meet Mille Mtkonja.

"Young People Blame Government. Star. There's a report in today's Toronto happy back at school. There's a report in today's Toronto the students. The young people are saying they're not bad to worse. We hear that in the schools. We hear it from essence what he has done is just create — it's gone from next minister we thought would solve that crisis, but in crisis, and he did. He created a crisis in education. The You had a minister over here who wanted to create a about them.

teacher out there who really feels that's the way you feel to tell you, member for York Mills, that there is not a classroom since school returned in early September. I have working people. I go back to the time I've spent in the Then he goes on to say that teachers are decent, hard-

anything from him, I truly think that is an understatement. I think that's an understatement. If I've ever heard suggests that there has been some ill will created out there, comments made by the member for York Mills. He

Mr Michals: I'd just like to comment on some of the

know that. We have our private asides and times that we have a few chuckles, and it's hard for the public to really appreciate what goes on here until they're here as a member themselves.

We owe it to our children to make sure we improve the education system. There was a comment about a story in the *Toronto Star*. We all know that the *Toronto Star* has a certain political bias. It was in the last will and testament of the founder of the *Toronto Star* that it would always be a Liberal supporter. That's a matter of history. The fact is that the same newspaper he's quoting, about a year and a half ago, carried a story by 22 professors in Ontario saying that the students coming out of Ontario's schools were not ready to face the challenges of university and had to do a lot of remedial work. That's your own newspaper that you like to quote.

We owe it to our children to make sure that the precious resources we have are concentrated in the classroom, where teachers need them and where teachers have always asked. Long before we became the government, I remember teachers being totally frustrated at the money that was spent at the boards that wasn't spent in the classroom. That's what we're changing. Yes, we're asking teachers to work a little bit longer. We think they will do it, but we hope we can quieten things down.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate. I'd like to bring some perspective to it from my area of Scarborough North where we are extremely concerned, like most people across the province, about where education is going.

Just reporting about what happened in the past, a few weeks ago, when the students were out of classes, the teachers have asked me to report that they are very happy to be back in the classroom. The students also said they are extremely happy to be back at school. But they also want me to say to you, Mr. Speaker, to relate to the Premier and to the government of the day, how frustrated and angry they are. They feel a great sense of being let down by a government that did not defend their cause or the teachers' cause. They feel extremely let down that this government started off on its mandate by bringing about a crisis that today is out of hand, and they can't manage it. Who is getting the brunt of it all? The students and the teachers. Relationships in the classroom over the years have been very good; as a matter of fact, I would say excellent. If you want to understand that, speak to some of the students today and ask them what they think of their teachers, what they think of education.

There was an article in the paper today where the students were expressing their view. Let me read it because it says it all. This is said by a student: "I understand the teachers were doing it for us, because they know how important education is for us. I don't think the government cared about students." That is rather a very concerning statement to make, because governments are about protecting the interests of people, making sure there's a balance, making sure people's interests are

1640

Then what is a library? I presume that in my days, when I was in elementary school, a library was completely different. As a matter of fact, "You'd better walk quickly, look for your book and do what you want to do without disturbing anyone." Today it's a different place altogether. It is completely different because of technology and information. The amount of information being levelled at students today is enormous. The fact is that teachers and librarians are instructional people, not in the classroom, as you want. The information technology today is enormous. So I appeal to those government members, when they are

Let me look at the librarians and teachers. Whether they can define it that a librarian is a teacher or not, there are teacher-librarians. There are individuals who get the students to understand how to do research, how to learn, how to find information. That's instructional teaching. They are the ones who will say, "I'll help you and teach you how to evaluate information." That's teaching. It's not done in the classroom. But what this government has done is excluded that from counting as part of teaching and has said it must be done in the classroom.

Let me look at the librarians and teachers. Whether they can define it that a librarian is a teacher or not, there are teacher-librarians. There are individuals who get the students to understand how to do research, how to learn, how to find information. That's instructional teaching. They are the ones who will say, "I'll help you and teach you how to evaluate information." That's teaching. It's not done in the classroom. But what this government has done is excluded that from counting as part of teaching and has said it must be done in the classroom.

That's the part I cannot — I know the emphasis here in the years to teach the individual students in the classes." Framework is to do the fine job they've been doing over that "obviously the role of the teachers within that went on, which is rather confusing afterward, and he said allow the teachers to do the job they do very well. He Fine words. You would believe they would continue to

Let me focus on the bill itself. Let me just state what the present government, who is saying they don't think it's served. But here is a young individual who has no faith in working in their interests.

looking at amending this bill, to include that as part of

teaching. Another area that I am a bit more familiar with from my days, although I've never taught in elementary or secondary school: I've taught in colleges and in guidance too. Guidance is so important. I've had many students who didn't even know where they wanted to go, how they wanted to go and when they should go about it. It took time and it took a lot of discipline and understanding, one to one, away from the chalk and from the blackboard. I tell you it's like giving the student wings. They start to fly because they understand where they should go. Guidance is an important part of instruction. It's teaching. When you exclude that and say those are not teachers, you're in some other occasion of not understanding what education is all about and what instruction is all about.

In guidance today what we need is guidance counsellors. If you look, for instance, at where students are going to go to university to understand what courses they are to direct themselves into, counsellors are needed daily to monitor that. The job market is so diverse, it is so complex, and where one is choosing one's career, where it should go — it is giving information and it is enhancing education, it is giving that as teaching. I'm instructional. If you can't count that as teaching, I'm saying again that you don't understand the aspect of what education and instruction are all about. It is so important. Many times when I was at the college level I saw students walking the corridor at a loss, sometimes for a year. The fact is that their grades were on average low, and as soon as they had a full understanding of what it's all about their grades went up, their contribution to society was even better and their productivity within the job market enhanced. So I appeal again to the government to look at that area when we're talking about guidance and counselling.

There's an area here that the government has completely ignored. Let us call it the replacement teachers. For instance, there are times when students are asked to go on a tour of the ROM or on some educational tour and two or three classes are left without a teacher. Those students who are left behind have got to be taught. But the fact is that this government refuses to look at replacement teachers within, because the principal has to find that teacher within the same system without going out, and would not count that as time before the classroom. Some of these insensitive ways are telling me — maybe this is it — that they don't understand the concept of education. I want to spend some time on an area that is of extreme importance, and it's extracurricular activities. They're taken for granted. I heard the member for York Mills expounding around the fact and I saw the minister here talking about monitoring the cafeteria or monitoring the schoolyard and saying that there are all kinds of things we have to count. That is being extremely frivolous, although important because actually it's the behavioural aspect of things. But let's move outside of that cafeteria argument, the argument about monitoring things in the schoolyard.

I've often said that, of most of the people I've worked with, I can identify those who are bright and those who are also involved in sports or activities. They have greater productivity, a greater way of dealing with people and individuals and environments. If we take that away, what are we talking about? Are we only measuring that you must take the textbook, study the textbook and that's the only thing we will count? I think this government should wake up to that fact.

We often brag of the fact that we live in one of the most diverse communities in the world, the number of languages that are spoken and the many things that happen because of the diversity of culture. I want to go back to counselling because the fact is suicide among students sometimes is too high, because depression is too high. The main purpose of having a counsellor and sometimes a religious factor in the school environment is to bring some sort of spiritual help. I'm not talking about any specific denomination but sometimes it's so important to have those individuals there to guide them along. Education is not only the book-learning aspect of it but also the spiritual fulfilment that is so helpful.

So if we are saying today that the bill you are bringing in is to improve education in our province, if we're saying all of that, why don't we look at it in a rather comprehensive and wider view? Why don't we look at it like education is beyond the classroom, not in the class, the fact is that all these things are extremely important to education. The attitude of the government, I think, plays a very important role in why some of these changes are not being taken in the way that maybe could be understood. The rush, the dictatorial way, the bullying manner, the attitude that this government has taken since 1995 that

Let's talk about the teacher who instructs football, let's talk about the teacher who would do the drama, the extracurricular activity. In my riding two schools that come to mind, Francis Libermann and Mother Teresa, have gotten scholarships. Let me tell you, I know personally that a \$200,000 scholarship over five years is normal, common, in my area. Why? If you speak to those instructors of football or basketball, two things happen to those students who have gotten those scholarships because of those extracurricular activities of football or girls' basketball or what have you. Because of the involvement and because of the healthy attitude of the student, their grades go up and they are able to be recruited across the United States on scholarships that are not even offered here in Canada. If you are saying that's not important, if this government is saying that's not important at all and that's fun and games, how can you discount scholarships of \$40,000 a year, \$30,000 a year, to students who would go to reputable universities abroad? What is happening is the enhancement of extracurricular activities that the teachers are doing. We don't know how to appeal to this government for them to be aware of the fact that that's a part of teaching, that's a part of education.

they are the biggest bully — "We know it's right and nobody else knows it" — is causing a great resistance within those people they serve. They feel that they have the almighty power and they can do that.

1650

No wonder at the SkyDome the other day when the students were there and they were introducing the Premier their reaction was spontaneous. Immediately they felt, "Here is an individual, here is a government that we don't want to hear from now." We were celebrating an individual talking about peace and freedom, and here was an individual who is forcing and using a bullying approach to our education. I wasn't too happy of course that the Premier of my province was booed in that manner, but you know what? The honesty was what I had to step back and say, "There is something there." There is some great concern by the students here that their education has been taken over by some individuals who are not consulting them, who are not listening to them, and they feel, "We shall express it in this way."

Of course, here is the other attitude of the Premier. He then remarked immediately that it was the teachers who put them up to it. Now I put it to you, teachers have not seen these students for months because they're on strike, and in a few seconds they put 40,000 students up to it to boo the Premier. Tell me something, is that not creating an atmosphere where the students are going to return to school with the teachers and feel that you are the one who — first, you are insulting the intelligence of those students who have analyzed the situation and said, "We want some part of education, a contribution in which we can tell you how we are to be educated." The teachers want some part.

We don't want a crisis like my good friend the former Minister of Education, who created this crisis. You see, what happened, it's a business to those individuals, the Conservatives over there. I know you understand that, Mr. Speaker. Education now becomes a business, as a profit in some respect or privatization in some respect. It has nothing to do with education as far as the Conservative Party is concerned. No concern at all. The bottom line, they want to privatize everything that moves. No wonder they brought in a minister of privatization. "If it moves or talks, we privatize it."

The fact of the matter is that, as one said, politics is about people, involving the people that you govern, not in a bullying, dictatorial "I know it all" attitude. No, not at all. It's about consultation, not rushing. Every bill that they had, they had the time to have this discussion in a longer time. Even when my leader, Dalton McGuinty, asked that Parliament be called back early to deal with these matters, they openly and blindly refused, but on coming back want to rush things through without any debate. Furthermore, even with the understanding that all parties wanted the teachers back, they were attaching all sorts of things to it, sneakily doing all this and thinking that the people don't understand that. They do understand that the Minister of Agriculture shakes his head in understanding that yes, they do. Because the fact is, later

I appeal to you all to look at the instructional time and the classroom time that you are trying to do, to measure the fact that librarians, guidance counsellors and some of those replacement teachers within the system are to be considered as part of instruction, as part of education, and the extracurricular activities that are done are an integral part of education, of how we bring our young people up. As a matter of fact, the contribution and the opportunities that are afforded to those students who later on have gotten scholarships of up to \$40,000 a year in areas that this government and all of Canada does not offer, why would you deny that type of education? It's beyond me. It is beyond the students. It is beyond comprehension. The fact is, you have an opportunity right now to amend that bill to reflect all those ingredients that I have mentioned.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr. Wildman: I would like to compliment the member for Scarborough North for his remarks. I certainly agree with his view that the government is playing politics with this whole process and is not as committed as they should be to a truly democratic process in this approach.

I must say that in bringing forward this bill and agreeing at least to sever it from the other bill, it does give us a greater opportunity to debate it. What is alarming, though, is that it's becoming a dialogue of the deaf. The other side doesn't listen to what we have to say. They don't understand what we have to say. They are completely oblivious to the fact that we aren't talking about 25 minutes more teaching time per day; we're talking about 25 more students per teacher per day. That's what it means. It means less time for teachers to spend with students, not more, because they have more students per teacher.

The government won't hear. They refuse to listen and to understand what they're doing. They just want to completely reform the system because their main aim is to take money out of the system — a billion dollars a year out of the system — not to improve the amount of money spent in the classroom. The only way they can do that in a system like this, where most of the funding goes towards paying salaries, is to reduce the number of teachers, and that's what this bill is about.

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): The member for Scarborough North has referred to a couple of issues. One was extracurricular activity after school and perhaps at lunchtime, those sorts of things, for sporting activities. The unions have indicated, unfortunately, that they're not going to provide that, at least in the immediate future. I hope they reconsider that because teachers have spent hours and hours on these matters and need to be commended for the work they have done in assisting generations of young people over the years on those very matters. I hope they reconsider and proceed to continue

with that worthwhile community activity they've been involved in.

The other issue he spent some time with was the topic of the 25 minutes, the extra instructional time. Anyone who has been involved in school boards in the past recalls how that happened. That was negotiated. One of the questions we asked was, "Why do secondary school teachers need more time than any other teachers across the country?" Hence that raises the topic of Bill 63. That was negotiated. Why? Because there was no more money. That extra 25 minutes or half-hour was negotiated simply for that reason. The teachers were asking for more money, the boards were saying there was no money, and that's how this extra time was created, more time than in any other part of the country.

Bill 63 doesn't deal with any of those matters, absolutely none of them. Bill 63 is simply to clarify the provision of instruction — in the word is "instruction" — in a secondary school. I'm sure it's been read. I haven't been present for all of the debate, but it is quite clear. It is very specific as to what instructional time means. During the illegal strike last year that question was raised by the teachers: "What's instructional time?" This bill tells us what it is.

Mr Michals: I would like to compliment my colleague the member for Scarborough North on the comments he made. A good number of the comments he made certainly touched home with me, as a former educator of 10 years in the classroom and counselling. I have to agree with him that there were a great number of students 11 years ago when I was in the classroom who wouldn't receive the education today that they were once offered.

He talked about the importance of extracurricular activities. I indicated to a high school teacher only last Monday that I'm certainly looking forward to taking a look at the number of students they're going to retain up until Christmas, because it's a very important time. When you get students back into the classroom, especially at the secondary school level, sometimes it's difficult to retain some of those students unless you have a little bit of a carrot. I've seen it happen many, many times where a student is brought into the school — the carrot may be something like basketball, football, whatever activity; it could be the yearbook, student council. Yes, you offer that to them, yet you're offering them the education that goes along with it. It can be very interesting when we take a look at those stats as we get closer to that very important time.

1700

He talked about guidance, guidance in terms of students attending and the very important things that guidance does for the student in the classroom. I cannot agree with him more. I believe that this government is out of touch with what is being offered to students in the classroom. They seem to think that every student is the same, can learn out of a book, the teacher stands in front of the classroom and it's all over. It's not that way.

I'm appalled to hear members suggesting that everything is rosy in our school system. They obviously

and the role of teachers.

On the whole question of the contribution of teachers by way of the extracurricular activities they're involved in, you would also think, to listen to this government, that was something that was negotiated over a number of years and teachers now get paid for that. Actually, the opposite is true. That is a contribution that teachers over the years decided they would make freely and voluntarily on their own. They saw the need to be involved in the lives of their students after school, to help with the sporting programs, because they saw the contribution that athletics and sports made to the all-round development of students in a community. The contribution they make to work in the environment, to work in social service areas, to work in helping students understand the politics of a community is all extracurricular. It's all above and beyond, and teachers need to be commended for that, not beaten up for it.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Scarborough North for two minutes.

Mr Cutting: I want to thank the members for Algoma, Dufferin-Peel, Kenora and Sault Ste Marie for their comments.

Underpinning what I just said is the fact that here's a government that had gone into improving education, and the first announcement was a \$400-million cut from the education system, but they were successful in cutting \$553 million, just taken out of education. Each day they brag about how much they're putting back into education and they keep cutting.

Here is an education system that was being assaulted by the social contract because money was taken out. It was promised to be put back in but never was put back in, therefore they were attacked again by more money taken out of it. So the education system has been subjected to many attacks, but the most brutal attack whatsoever is the non-communicative way in which this government has proceeded in making legislation without much consultation. The rapid way of ramming things through has caused confusion itself, and I think it does not hold us to really feeling that changes are for the better. One

haven't been to their local schools, because it's just not that way. I think the member for Scarborough North has pointed that out in many, many areas.

Mr Martin: I just wanted to commend the member for Scarborough North for the very excellent remarks he made here this afternoon with regard to this bill, particularly the comments he made to clarify the issue of the very valuable contribution that teachers make to our system and the effort and the energy they put into making sure our schools are and continue to be the best they can be.

The product we produce in our schools today is at the top of any group of graduates. No matter where you look, whether it's in Canada, in Europe or across the world, today, our students play second fiddle to no one. That's I think a direct result of the dedication and commitment of the teachers who work in that system. It's really unfortunate that this government has taken the tack to move our education system into a more market-driven reality, to attack the teachers, to diminish the contribution

becomes very suspicious when one does things like that, and suspicion brings about fear. As a matter of fact, remarks and comments about teachers that are made daily by the Premier and by the Minister of Education do not really add a good atmosphere.

I just want to encourage the individuals out there, the guidance counsellors, the librarians and teachers, in the excellent work that they are doing. I personally want to go on record commending them for the fabulous job they're doing. The Liberal Party will continue to support that.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Martin: I appreciate the opportunity tonight to go on the record as saying that what this government is doing in this instance, as in so many instances in no matter what facet of government delivery of services or activity in this province, is taking us down a road that is absolutely wrong and that is antithetical to all that we who love this province, who have worked hard in so many ways to build this province in our communities and in our neighbourhoods, have tried to do over the last number of years. There are members who served in this place who are probably turning in their graves today as they look back and realize where this government is taking us.

Today we're talking about education. What is this bill about? That's the question we all need to ask and that we should all be focusing on. It's a very feeble and simplistic and wrong-headed attempt to solve a problem that this government has created in the education system. We know that from day one this government set out to create a crisis, to break the system, to tear it down, to destroy it, to affect it in a way that would cause all of us to become more anxious and nervous and worried about just exactly where it was going so that they could then remake it in their own image. Their image is one that is driven by a market approach to everything, a bottom line to everything, a system of education that would see fewer and fewer of our students actually getting the full advantage of the tremendous resource that now exists in our education system and that will be there less and less for those who need it as we move into the future.

We see this government taking the education system in a way that will see more and more students who have found themselves able to take advantage and recognize the value they have, the contribution they can make in ever more exciting and creative ways so that they might maximize the potential they have to contribute to the communities in which they live and the society to which they will belong in a meaningful and fulfilling way — we have over a number of years found ways in our education system, sometimes miraculously, to respond to challenges that society throws out way as it evolves, to deal with students who come to an understanding of the challenges they face, whether it be learning disabilities or social situations that aren't encouraging them to participate fully in the school system or the so many other ways that students find themselves being challenged today, to respond in a creative, flexible, encouraging way and to bring to the situation those teachers who were always willing to participate, to go the distance,

whether it was after school or weekends, to learn new skills to respond to all of these challenges. That won't be the school system we will have in place five or 10 years down the road if we allow this government to have its way in the way that it has over the last three years since they were given the authority to be the government in this province. This government is one to take us down a road that is absolutely wrong and not in keeping with those traditions we've all come to appreciate and support in so many ways in Ontario.

It's a very feeble attempt at this point in time, with teachers out there, the people who see at first hand and most immediately and directly the initial fallout of the new program that's coming at them. They are out there saying to school boards and saying to the government of Ontario that what they feel, what they see, what they're sensing in the schools they teach in and in the communities they live in is fundamentally wrong, is fundamentally flawed, is not going to get us to the place that collectively we want to be.

1710

With the vehicles that they have at their disposal, unfortunately, in the system that we're in, very limited, with the government that we have in front of us, with the lack of opportunity for discussion and consultation, their only option is to strike, is to work to rule, is to hold back the contribution in a minimal way that they normally make to the everyday life of the school they're in and the students they teach.

This government, as is its way, brings in the big hammer, brings in back-to-work legislation. I'm not saying here for a minute this afternoon that I'm happy when students aren't in school, when students aren't able to participate in the way that all of us have, I'm sure, over many years participated in the schools we attended, whether it was in the classroom, whether it was in some after-school activity, sporting activity perhaps. All of it was very good, all of it driven and led and motivated by the very excellent teachers that we have in the system, all of it organized by school boards and administrations that were apart, diminished, and their contribution not valued or recognized in the way it should be, so that this government can take that system and make it more productive for the marketplace out there that actually needs fewer of our students, in fact needs only those who are the most bright to participate. Everybody else is dispensable. They're trying to do that in a way that becomes very much, as I look at it over the last two or three years and watch it evolve, a smoke-and-mirrors exercise.

That's one part of what's happening here today. That's one part of what this piece of legislation is about. The other is that it's very much a strategy for re-election. This government knows it can't do anything unless it continues to be the government. This government knows, after four or five years in government, they have no choice but to go back to the people for another mandate. They know, if the people of Ontario cast a vote that is negative on their performance, on their record, they will no longer be able

to continue down the road of changing systems in the very dramatic and negative way that they have been. So this is

also part of a strategy for re-election.

I know myself, as I watched the battle build and then take place between the government and the teachers, that for me it felt very uncomfortably similar to the battle that was created, the rift that was created, the misinformation that was put out there during the last provincial election where the poor were targeted very directly by this government as the cause of all the problems we face in this province.

Those of us who know differently, those of us who are in communities, who live in communities, who work in communities, who are committed to working with people to make sure that they're able to participate in a fulsome way in their home towns, know they are not in any way, even in any small way, the cause of the difficulties we face in the 1990s in Ontario and in Canada today. As a matter of fact, they are a product of the system that we find ourselves in.

We have a system in place in Ontario and in Canada today that takes for granted that there's going to be somewhere around 10% of the population always unemployed. To suggest for a minute that those people, of the social ills that we confront is wrong, and to suggest for a second that now, as we move to another election, as we move to a second shot for this government at being in power, the unions within which now the teachers fit are, as well as the poor, the cause of the problems that we face together, the cause of any of the difficulties that the economy is facing at this particular time in their history, is wrong.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): Point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe there is no quorum.

The Acting Speaker: Would you check and see if there's a quorum present.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Sault Ste Marie.

Mr Martin: I appreciate that people will be back in the House here listening to what I have to say, because I think it's really important, particularly that the government members begin to understand, that we understand, that the people out there are understanding of what's going on and that they will pay a price for the tactics they are using for their own very personal and selfish end, which is to get re-elected so they can continue to impose the market-driven agenda that we've seen so clearly and that has been so devastating to our health care system, to our education system and to our communities.

Today we're talking about the education system and we're talking about a bill that will force teachers back to work, which I think a whole lot of us don't have any real difficulty with, except that it's a very feeble attempt at

resolving a problem that is much bigger than simply having our schools open and students going back at this particular time.

I was saying before I sat down and we had a quorum call that one of the tactics this government is using in its re-election strategy is to focus on unions and teachers as a union group in particular in this instance and to set them up as a straw person to run against come an election, in the same way as they set the poor up in the last election. They will take the poor in this election plus the unions, blame everything that is challenging in our society today on them and hope that people will buy that by way of the tremendously expensive public relations machine that they now have in motion out there, as we listen to the radio and watch TV and hear the Premier and others tell us how wonderful everything is and how wonderful everything they have done is for us, except that we know, those of us who are back in our communities, those of us who are living in the streets of this province, that in fact it's not all that wonderful.

1720

This government has chosen to beat up on teachers. Anybody who is fair-minded or who remembers their own education system will know that that's patently unfair and wrong, because teachers, more than or as much as any professional group out there today, give of themselves day in and day out, above and beyond the call of duty, to make sure their students have everything they need to reach their potential. You'd think, to listen to the government, that teachers coaching sports programs, teachers running clubs, teachers hanging around the playground at lunch-time and after school to make sure that they are safe places and that kids are enjoying themselves and are getting home on time, teachers taking time out to take kids on school trips and so many other ways that teachers give of themselves above and beyond what they do in the classroom is somehow something they get paid to do, something that is within their contract that they must do, not recognizing for a second that this is something that they, over a number of years, found was consistent with the role of teacher in school and something they did freely and actually enjoyed doing, and in many instances prepared themselves in special ways by taking extra courses, by going back to school in the summertime, by going to meetings with people of like mind so that they might become better at those activities that they are responsible for that are above and beyond what they do in the classroom.

I'm sure any one of you here would have two or three or four or a dozen examples of teachers in your own life, in the lives of your children, who go above and beyond the call of duty to make sure that the students in their school or their community have what we now so often take for granted and don't appreciate.

I remember being in Sudbury one weekend last winter, 300 kilometres away from Sault Ste Marie at a curling bonspiel. My daughter was curling. I recognized that there were two teachers there whom I knew, friends of mine. I asked them what they were doing there and they said they

were coaching. There was a group of maybe four students who were on the school curling team who had chosen to go and be in this bonspiel in Sudbury and they were there with them. They took time out of their schedules, away from their families, away from their personal life so that they could be in Sudbury for that weekend supervising those young people in the hotel that they were staying in, making sure that they had good meals and coaching them as they curled in this bonspiel.

Not only that, but I noticed that while the students were not curling or there was some free time when these teachers could have been doing something that would be to their own pleasure, they weren't. I went over at one point to one of them who was sitting at a table, obviously very busy, and I said, "What are you doing?" She said, "I'm marking exams." There was another one there and she was preparing a class for the coming Monday because she wasn't going to be able to be at home to do that.

So for this government to suggest for even a nanosecond that all teachers do is teach six or seven or eight classes or teach from 9 o'clock until 3:30 every day is to not understand the job and the role and the contribution of teachers, particularly in the system as it exists today. Those two teachers are not out of the ordinary. Those two teachers that I ran into in Sudbury, who were not only coaching and looking after and being responsible for those four students, were doing work to prepare themselves so that they would be ready for the class they would teach when they got back to Sault Ste Marie on Monday morning.

Another group of teachers in Sault Ste Marie took upon themselves — nothing that the teachers' federation negotiated in their contract, nothing that the school board came and said, "You have to do this," or even "Would you do this?" — something that they saw would be in the interest of the community, actually in the interest of the world we live in, the community that we live in, and some of the students in their school. They took on an environmental project that saw them take responsibility for a small part of Lake Superior, to teach the kids the connection between all of the ecosystems along the shore of Lake Superior so that these students would be more knowledgeable, more understanding of how important it is actually do some very concrete work to protect that piece of shoreline so that it might be there for all of us to enjoy and to contribute in such a positive way to the whole environment, which we're all so dependent on for our livelihood. This is a group of teachers in a high school in Sault Ste Marie, at White Pines.

Mr Wildman: Internationally recognized.

Mr Martin: Internationally recognized for the work they do in that school and in our community.

I had my own daughter come home on Monday of this week and ask me what I was doing to look after and protect the environment. She challenged me very directly, as a member of Parliament, and said: "What are you doing, Dad? What is the government doing to protect the environment? What about that greenhouse effect? What

go back to work.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

Mr Froese: I'd like to comment on the comments made by the member for Sault Ste Marie. I would agree with the member that teachers are valuable and hard-working and they have the interests of students in common. But I don't agree with him when he says this bill is a strategy for re-election. I don't understand where he's coming from on that.

The bill is very simple. It's about writing the meaning of "instructional time." Instructional time was debated last year at length. There was an extensive discussion at that time about teaching time. At that time — and it's the same as this time, I guess — the government didn't really feel there was a need to define instructional time. As it's commonly understood, it means the time spent in the classroom teaching children. Unfortunately, as we have seen, unions have tried to skew the meaning of "instruction," because their goal is to protect the teachers, to get them the best deal. That's understood, but that contradicts the spirit of the law that was passed last year. Cafeteria supervision, as we all know, is not instructional time; neither is hall monitoring. We know that instructional time is teaching in a class. That's what the bill does.

There's no doubt that our teachers are valuable. There's no doubt they work hard and they deserve the credit for where our children are in education. But we need to —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Member for Kenora.

Mr Mielash: I'd just like to compliment the member for Sault Ste Marie on the comments he made here in the House. There are very few speakers, except of course speakers from the government side, who get up and don't refer to a crisis in education. As the member for Sault Ste Marie was saying, this is truly a bottom-line government. I was indicating earlier in the House that, if I were a teacher in the system, I think I would find it very difficult to work under the circumstances that have been created by

also going to ensure that there isn't going to be that music member for Sault Ste Marie. You're in a classroom, you have a great number of students in front of you, you are working the full four periods a day, the full load, and you're worried about the crisis being created in education, whether it's by the former minister or the minister we're dealing with now.

I think the member for Sault Ste Marie points out very well the fact that this is a government that just doesn't seem to understand what's going on out there, the frustration I referred to earlier. They don't seem to understand that the teachers, the students, the administrators, the board members are all saying they just don't feel that they're getting the ear of this government. They're not being listened to.

1730

He goes on to talk about how various teachers have had a great influence on the lives of young people. Again, I refer to the attendance of students, what it will be come December, whether we will see a great difference come December, and whether those people actually did make a difference, those teachers who don't have the time, as he indicated, to do the coaching, those teachers who don't have time to go out there for outdoor ed, supervise yearbook activities, whatever. But I think it's certainly going to make a great difference to those folks we retain in the educational system.

I commend the member for Sault Ste Marie on some of the many great points that he has brought forward here today.

Mr Wildman: I want to congratulate my friend from Sault Ste Marie on his remarks and his understanding of the importance of teachers, the difficulty that teachers now face and the particular problems we face in the education system because of the decline in morale because this government has denigrated teachers and continually attacked teachers.

Now we have the member for St Catharines-Brock, for instance, getting up and saying the government believes that teachers are valuable. This is after denigrating them for the last two and a half years.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): Come on.

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): Come on.

Mr Wildman: I wish members on the other side of the House would watch a movie called Mr Holland's Opus and understand the importance of extracurricular activities and the kind of work that teachers do and the good impression they can make upon students. The problem with that movie, unfortunately, is that in that case the state government's funding has been cut, so they are no longer going to have a music program. At the end they do have the concert and everyone's happy, but they're forgetting the fact that the next year in that school there's not going to be any music program.

That's what's happened with education in this province because this government is micromanaging. They say the teachers are valuable but what they really mean is that teachers are disposable, because what this is about is ensuring there are fewer teachers in the system and it's

What we're trying to define is there's a requirement for instructional time. There's a requirement in this bill for four hours and 10 minutes of credit time. Most people today work eight hours. In that eight hours I think there are four hours and 10 minutes of instructional and I think there are four hours of time for the sports. Keep the student in mind. Their extracurricular activities are very important contact that I don't think teachers should deny the students and I don't think —

The Speaker: Thank you, member for Durham East. Response, member for Sault Ste Marie.

Mr Martin: I want to thank the honourable members for responding to my comments. I've obviously touched a nerve on the government side and have got some support for my thoughts from my colleagues on this side of the House.

This is very much a "get re-elected" strategy by this government. It's setting the teachers up as members of unions, demonizing them by a misinformation propaganda machine and then blaming them for everything so that you

can then say, "We need another term to fix what the teachers have broken," when in fact you're the ones who have broken it.

The misinformation you're putting out there: You talk about — what is it, 22 and 24? Is that the maximum or average class size you say is happening? My own daughter in grade 6 is in a class of 35 students. Where is the 22? This is an elementary school student, with 35 students in her class.

Mr Wildman: Twenty-five.

Mr Martin: Pardon? Twenty-five in elementary?

Well, she's in a class of 35. I talked to my daughter in high school after school today and said, "How many kids are in your class by average?" What's the high school average that this government says is going to be in school? Twenty-two students per class in secondary school —

Mr O'Toole: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member for Sault Ste Marie has made a couple of references which clarifies for me that he has not read the bill. He doesn't know the —

The Speaker: That's not a point of order. Sit down, member for Durham East.

Mr Martin: Thirty students. The other misinformation is this whole issue of the extra 25 minutes they're asking teachers to teach. If you look at that in its full context and understand how that impacts on a teacher's ability to prepare for classes and the actual number of students they get to teach, it's absolute —

The Speaker: Thank you. Further debate?

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): I welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate this afternoon. I'm a little disappointed, however, that we are required, in an effort to protect higher standards in education, to spend this time debating a bill about an issue where we all understand what the definition is. The whole need for the bill is questionable, but to protect the quality of education we need the bill.

I'm also speaking from the context of somebody who has two daughters who are teachers, somebody who has three grandchildren in the system, all of whom, by the way, are in class sizes that are lower than they were last year, who has a sister and her husband who are teachers and who used to be a teacher myself. So I have some idea of what is involved in the education system.

The first thing I want to do is compliment the elementary school teachers of Chatham-Kent. Those involved in the public school system in Chatham-Kent were the first board to settle under the terms of Bill 160. They settled their contract. The separate school teachers have also settled their contract. So at the elementary school level in Chatham-Kent we don't have any rotating strikes, we don't have any lockouts and we don't have any work-to-rule. We have a large group of very dedicated teachers working with a new core curriculum, working with brand new textbooks, working in the best interests to meet higher standards for the kids in Chatham-Kent. My hat's off to the elementary school teachers in Chatham-Kent.

Now we get to the secondary school teachers. It's interesting that while we have harmony at the elementary

school level, at the secondary school level, with both boards, we have rotating strikes and work-to-rule. It begs the question of what effect this has on our students. It came home most to me last weekend, which in Chatham-Kent is a traditional Red Feather weekend. It's the kickoff to the United Way campaign. The Red Feather weekend has about a 45-year tradition in our community. It's a weekend that revolves around our high school students. It involves a parade, it involves football games, it involves broomball, cheerleading competitions, a whole array of competitive games hosted by the young people, under their school banners, to promote the good of the United Way.

1740

This year those same students who want to go out and allowed to go out and participate in the red feather activities on behalf of the United Way.

We have no high school sports. The parents volunteered, "Let us come into the school and let us help out with those sports." They're not allowed to do that. The question the parents have asked me is: "Who owns these schools anyway? Who owns these schools, that we as the parents and the taxpayers are not allowed to come in and use the school to help our kids?" Parents are calling me up and they're asking me, "Am I going to get a rebate on my taxes as a result of this time the teachers are not teaching?" You know what's happening? We have Mr Manners and Mr Jarvis calling the shots in Chatham-Kent. They don't even know our kids, they don't even know our students, but they're calling the shots.

School boards are complaining that they don't have enough money. The big complaint I hear is, "We can't raise taxes any more." They seem to forget that that's the issue. That's why we're going about the change, because for the last several years they raised taxes indiscriminately at the same time as the quality of our education and the standards were deteriorating. That's the problem. That's what we're trying to solve here. We're trying to create a system that is affordable and provides much better quality education for our children. That's what we're trying to do.

School boards in my riding, as in most ridings across the province, have more money to spend in the classroom. There's nothing in education that is more important than what happens in the classroom. Most people will be aware of the fact that the separate school board in Chatham-Kent made a deal with the secondary school teachers. What they did in that deal is that they agreed to raise average class size up to 24 so that they could reduce instruction time below what was required in Bill 160. They figured, I guess, on the old adage that two wrongs make a right: "We'll break two rules. We'll raise class size above the average so we can have instruction time below the required level."

It's interesting. When this debate was happening last November I can remember Mr Jarvis and Mr Manners

hours in the classroom, that leaves us almost six hours for preparation time and for extracurricular activities. Maybe we need to look at the school day for teachers being from 7 in the morning until 8 at night. Maybe that's what we need to look at.

Mr Wildman: Are you suggesting that? Are you proposing that?

Mr Carroll: Well, if we're going to talk a comparable number of hours, 1,950 hours for nurses, I think 1,900 hours for a teacher is fine. It's an interesting comparison.

Another group you might want to compare to is police officers. We all know the wonderful job our police officers are in keeping our communities safe. Police officers are in the same kind of ballpark for average incomes. They work 1,900 hours a year. So I don't know, I just think, if we look at yearly employment, rather than on a day-by-day basis, and the yearly requirement, maybe we need to put the school year in context, put the 4.1 hours that we're asking our secondary school teachers to be in the classroom in a context compared to other professions.

I know down my way we've taken five police forces and put them all together in one police force. That has been a difficult process for all those police officers involved. But you know, they've embraced the change, they've co-operated, they've gone through the change and they've gotten us to a better place. The nurses and our hospitals all across the province have been asked to participate in reorganization and restructuring because they understand that there is a better way to do what we do. They've participated and co-operated and helped us to get to a new place.

What we're asking the teachers to do — and in my case the elementary teachers have already done it, but what we're asking those secondary school teachers to do — is to help us be part of the solution here, help us to get to a higher standard of education on behalf of the young people of our province.

1750

We have really good teachers. As a matter of fact, most teachers are really good. Their job is a tough job. It's especially tough in the environment in which we live of a lack of personal discipline, some of which is beyond our control. I don't say the teachers don't have a tough job. I don't say they don't work hard. But you know, everybody is working hard today. Young people working in industry are working hard. Nurses are working hard. Policemen are working hard. Everybody is working hard today. It's a condition of the world we live in. We can't run away from that. We can't absolve one particular part of our society from the requirement to work hard. Teachers do work hard. That is great, that is fine, we recognize that, but then most of us in our world are working hard.

Mr Martin: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't think we have a quorum.

The Speaker: Would you please check to see if we have a quorum.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Speaker ordered the bells rung.

poob-pooing the idea that we were going to legislate average class size. They poob-pooed that and said it didn't make any difference. Now of course what they would like to do is negotiate away that legislated average class size.

The question we have to ask ourselves is, why are our secondary school teachers in Chatham-Kent and basically in many areas of the province continuing to victimize our students? It's over the issue of instruction time. I'm not going to dwell a long time on the things we've heard, that it's only 25 more minutes a day or that we're still lower than seven other provinces. Even at the 4.1 hours, the four hours and 10 minutes, we're still lower than seven other provinces in the country, and in those seven other provinces those secondary school teachers have a full array of extracurriculars. I'm not going to dwell on the fact that at 4.1 hours it's still well below the average in the country of 4.5 hours. I won't dwell on the fact that the elementary school teachers have and continue to operate at 4.2 hours. I won't dwell on those issues.

But what I would like to talk about is other professions. I'd like to zero in on nurses. We all understand that the nurses of our province have been called upon to respond to some challenges in the last few years. I've got some statistics here that tell us roughly what nurses get paid. I think it's a fairly valid comparison. Nurses work, especially in a hospital environment, in a high-pressure environment where they're dealing with life-and-death issues. Not always do they get the thanks they deserve, but they continue to plod on and do the best they can, sometimes under difficult circumstances. We certainly have asked them to participate in restructuring. In my own community of Chatham-Kent, we're in the process of refining two hospitals from two campuses on to one campus.

It has been difficult for front-line nurses. Front-line nurses working in a hospital environment get paid roughly between \$35,000 and \$55,000. Secondary school teachers, on the other hand, have average incomes somewhere between \$30,000 and \$65,000. If we look at the time requirements, those nurses' salaries are based on 1,950 hours a year. Let's say a nurse is working 1,950 hours a year, a comparable kind of pressure job to a teacher. Let's take a teacher working 1,950 hours a year. We all know that Bill 160 mandates 190 days of a school year. By golly, 190 days of a school year at 10 hours a day is 1,900.

Mr Martin: This is more of the bullshit.

The Speaker: Oh, man, that's out of order.

Mr Martin: I withdraw, but honest to God —

The Speaker: I want a straight withdrawal on that.

Mr Carroll: A straight withdrawal.

Mr Martin: If we look at a comparison here, and certainly the members of the third party are big people at comparing one job to another job, I think a nurse-teacher comparison is a valid comparison. Let's say we'd like our teachers to work 1,900 hours a year, relatively the same number as our nurses work. They'd be doing it for less money, but let's ask them to work that number. Based on 190 days, that's 10 hours a day. If we're going to have 4.1

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Speaker: The member for Chatham-Kent.

Mr Carroll: To sum up, I believe that the secondary school teachers in my riding of Chatham-Kent really do

want to get back to work and get on with the job of providing quality education. We talk a lot about people

being held hostage. I for one think that part of the hostage situation here is the teachers in my area of Chatham-Kent

being held hostage by Mr Manners and Mr Jarvis, and I think that is totally unacceptable. When I read in the paper

that the OSSTF has ordered a series of rotating strikes, I say to myself, who's in charge? Why should Mr Manners

be in charge? Who put Mr Manners in charge of everything around here?

Anyway, our education reforms, as all of us know, are about setting and achieving higher standards for our kids.

The parents realize that, and most of all the teachers realize that. The current situation we're

involved in is a result of the fact that the unions refuse to acknowledge what in fact is the law and they refuse to put

our kids first.

I offer those comments. As I said at the beginning, I appreciate the opportunity to speak, but I'm disappointed

that we need to be here to define "instruction time" when we had the argument back in November about what it

was. We all know what it is, and here we are required to introduce legislation. But if that's what it takes, we'll tie it

down with legislation and we'll get on with the job of providing good quality education for the kids of our

province.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): I appreciate the opportunity to give a few comments on those words

saying he's disappointed that we're here. I guess we should remind him that the only reason we're here is

because his government brought in Bill 160 a year ago that was such a mess that here we are, a year later, dealing

with it. If he doesn't want to be here, all he should do is advise those who are drafting their legislation that they

should do it better. We've had many cases of this. The member for Chatham-Kent will recall that we've debated

six property tax bills because this government can't get it right. He shouldn't be surprised that we're here a year

later trying to fix up a bill that they introduced in 1997.

The member for Chatham-Kent really, to me, double-speaks. He gets up and rails about the secondary school teachers in his riding and then he says, "But most

teachers are really good." He said they don't work hard and then he said: "I understand. They do work hard." You can't have it both ways. You either don't like those teachers in your riding or you do like those teachers in your riding.

One final thing when it comes to double-speak: I can recall when the parents were getting together on the closure of the Romney school and the speaker from Chatham-Kent said, "I'll do what I can to help you keep it

open." You know, it was his government, the result of his

that caused the school to close in the first place.

Mr Wildman: I understand the member for Chatham-Kent is going to introduce an amendment to the bill

suggesting that the hours per day should be 10, as he indicated, and I'm looking forward to debating that

amendment when it comes forward. I just wonder, though, if that's going to solve the problem. The point is this: The

dispute at the secondary level is not about 25 more minutes per day; it's about 25 more students per teacher.

That's the difference.

I have an example of this. In the Sault Ste. Marie, September 21, a teacher wrote and pointed out that in that particular situation the teachers there suggested extending the school

day, extending the period so they could make up the number of minutes that this bill says they should be

of students, not more students. She says, "Mr Harris rejected the teachers' proposal to extend the high school

day to accommodate more time for the same number of students, and the reason is clear: Mr Harris wants to

reduce the number of teachers." Then she goes on to say, "Having teachers instruct an additional class within the

current teaching day not only reduces the number of teachers but reduces teacher effectiveness."

That's the point. They're going to have to teach 25 more students each, another class each. It isn't going to

mean more time for individual students with teachers. It's going to mean less time because each teacher is going to

have a total number of students that is greater. That's what it means. That's what this bill is about. It's not about

time so much as ensuring that there are fewer teachers teaching more students, and that does not improve the

quality of education for those students and that's what the dispute is about. Teachers are trying to defend the quality

of education for students.

Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South): I'm pleased to rise to reflect on the comments of my colleague the member for

Chatham-Kent who, listening attentively to his speech, I think hit the issue right on the nose. The debate that has

been revealed through Bill 160 and the strikes and the debates in the chamber these last few days is strictly

about, from the union perspective and from the opposition, working conditions.

Jack pointed out that yes, we are asking the secondary school teachers to do teaching in the classroom,

instructional time, of approximately 1,250 minutes per week, which is still less than, according to the member for

Chatham-Kent — I believe his facts are right — or equal to seven other provinces, and even with that increase in

teachers do on a regular basis and have been doing for some time.

Talking to some of the teachers in my riding and friends and acquaintances and just out and about in the

community, I think the elementary school teachers in Niagara have caught on to what the debate is truly about. It's the amount of teaching time we're asking secondary

school teachers to contribute. If you look in Niagara, both

the boards had increases in classroom funding. Both of the elementary grids have settled with increases. I know it's been six or seven years, through those long NDP years, that they didn't have an increase in their wages, and now both Niagara Catholic elementary and Niagara Catholic elementary have had raises. In fact, both boards have hired more elementary school teachers, 100 in the Niagara Catholic board, have new textbooks coming into the schools and a new, strict, back-to-the-basics, raise-the-standards curriculum that is very popular among the teachers. I think the elementary school teachers know what this is all about. It's about secondary school teaching time.

On the subject of extracurricular, I know that many secondary school teachers are intimidated by their union from coaching. They want to coach but they've been told by their union leaders not to coach. I think that is very sad and it shows you what this debate is really about.

Mr Michalash: As has been referred to already, this was certainly a great amount of doubletalk that we heard here from the member for Chatham-Kent. At one time he's saying the teachers don't work hard enough, but yet he's telling us on the other hand we have good teachers in the system. It just goes back to a point I made earlier on, that a lot of these members in this government, especially the member for Chatham-Kent, don't seem to have been in touch with their local teachers in their local schools to listen to some of the concerns of their teachers because I think he would have come out with a little bit of a different attitude towards the job teachers are doing for us. He just doesn't seem to understand the school environment and what's happening in terms of education today and in terms of the environment we see in our schools.

I go back to the point that he must understand that, yes, we do need good teachers in there and, yes, we do have to support them as well. We don't have to have teachers going to the classroom every day wondering what crisis is going to be created by your government next. Again, I suggest that he may want to visit some of the schools to find out just how demoralized the teaching staff are.

The House adjourned at 1804.

The Speaker: It now being after 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 of the clock tomorrow.

On that basis, I rest my case.

It's interesting, I had no reference made to the nurses and police officers. Obviously the opposition accepts the comparison of school teachers to nurses and police officers. On that basis, I rest my case.

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To the member for Essex South, who made reference to the school in Romney, I would suggest that he make a little visit to the school in Wheatley, where 98 of the kids from Romney were transferred, and talk to the principal and talk to the parents. You find out just how well those kids and those parents are doing.

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It's interesting that the members from the official opposition would make reference to doubletalk. If we have any masters of doubletalk in this place, it obviously is the members of the official opposition. They talk about wanting to get our children back into school and yet they just voted against legislation to get our kids back into school. So I'm not sure — but they did it quickly. We've got to give him credit, they did it quickly. So that's good.

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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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CONTENTS

Wednesday 30 September 1998

OTHER BUSINESS

Visitors	2095
The Speaker	2085, 2091
George Nixon	2086
Mr Sterling	2086
Mr Conway	2086
Mr Sillpo	2086
John Rakins	2087
Mr Hodgson	2087
Mr Conway	2087
Mr Wildman	2088
Notice of dissatisfaction	2098
Mr Conway	2098

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 30 septembre 1998

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 1998 modifiant la Loi sur l'Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario,

projet de loi 65, *M. Wildman*

Adoptée.....2085

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 1998 sur les heures d'enseignement : normes minimales, projet de loi 63,

M. David Johnson

Débat présurné ajourné.....2120

PETITIONS

Road safety	2095
Mr Sillpo	2095
Mr Clement	2095
Health care fraud	2095
Mr Grimmett	2095
Mrs Witmer	2096
Jail closures	2096
Mr Cleary	2096
Mr Runciman	2096
Mr Conway	2096
Apprenticeship training	2097
Mr Lessard	2097
Mr David Johnson	2097

Hospital restructuring	2098
Mr Cleary	2098
Mr Curling	2099
Cancer prevention	2098
Mrs Churley	2098
Abortion	2098
Mr Rollins	2098
Mrs Fisher	2099
Mr Bob Wood	2099
Diabetes education services	2099
Mr Michlash	2099
Mr Curling	2100
Property taxation	2100
Mr Skarica	2100
Protection for health care workers	2100
Mr Boushy	2100
Electoral reform	2100
Mr Arnott	2100
Dental care	2100
Mr Curling	2100

SECOND READINGS

Instruction Time: Minimum Standards Act, 1998, Bill 63, <i>Mr David Johnson</i>	2108
Mr Wildman	2101, 2105, 2108
2111, 2116, 2119	
Mr Froese	2104, 2115
Mr Michlash	2104, 2108, 2112
2115, 2120	
Mr Martin	2104, 2112, 2113
2116	
Mr Smith	2105, 2108
Mr Turnbull	2105, 2109
Mr Curling	2109, 2112
Mr Tilson	2111
Mr O'Toole	2116
Mr Carroll	2117, 2120
Mr Crozier	2119
Mr Hudak	2119
Debate deemed adjourned	2120

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Treaty 3 first nations	2083
Mr Michlash	2083
Nickel Belt by-election	2083
Mr O'Toole	2085
Michael and Matthew McLennan	2083
Mr Klees	2083
Health care funding	2083
Mrs Pupatello	2083
Homelessness	2084
Mr Marchese	2084
David Nicholson	2084
Mr Martinuk	2084
Long-term care	2084
Mr Curling	2084
Court staffing	2085
Mr Wildman	2085
REPORTS BY COMMITTEES	
Standing committee on government agencies	2085
The Speaker	2085
Report deemed adopted	2085
FIRST READINGS	
Ontario College of Teachers Amendment Act, 1998, Bill 65, <i>Mr Wildman</i>	2085
Agreed to	2085
Mr Wildman	2085
ORAL QUESTIONS	
School closures	2088
Mrs McLeod	2088, 2093
Mr David Johnson	2088, 2093
Mr Wildman	2093
Upperwash Provincial Park	2089
Mr Phillips	2089
Mr Runciman	2089
Textbooks	2090
Mr Hampton	2090
Mr David Johnson	2090
Violence against women	2091
Mr Hampton	2091
Mrs Cunningham	2091
Mrs Churley	2092
Hospital funding	2092
Mr Kennedy	2092
Mrs Witmer	2092
Youth employment	2094
Mr Carroll	2094
Mr Villeneuve	2094
Hazardous waste	2094
Mr Agostino	2094
Mr Sterling	2094

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of Ontario
Second Session, 36th Parliament

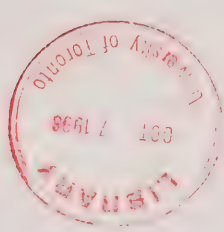
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de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 36^e législature

Official Report
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des débats
(Hansard)

Thursday 1 October 1998

Jeu- 1^{er} octobre 1998



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Honourable Chris Stockwell

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L'honorable Chris Stockwell

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 1^{er} octobre 1998

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 1 October 1998

2121

*The House met at 1000.
Prayers.*

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION
(THE HAGUE CONVENTION) ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998

SUR L'ADOPTION INTERNATIONALE
(CONVENTION DE LA HAYE)

Mr Cordiano moved second reading of the following

bill:

Bill 23, An Act to implement The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption / Projet de loi 23, Loi de mise en application de la Convention de La Haye sur la protection des enfants et la coopération en matière d'adoption internationale.

Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence): I'm very pleased

to be given an opportunity to discuss my bill this morning. At the same time, I'm also disappointed. I'm disappointed because the minister has not in her wisdom seen this bill through to ratification.

I'm going to discuss the bill in some detail, but before I do, I'd like to say this: There are few occasions as a member of Parliament when an issue like this comes along and a situation like this comes along where constituents reach out and ask for your help. There are few times when something reaches out and touches your heart, something that is very emotional and very touching.

This is one of those occasions. It's very gratifying for any member of the House, as I'm sure all of you will discover from time to time in your careers, however short or long they may be, when you get the opportunity to do something like this.

This legislation is simply designed to facilitate the adoption process, the adoption of children from other countries by families in Ontario. It is a unique opportunity for a minister to actually do something which would empower individuals in Ontario to do that, to accomplish their goals, to realize their dreams.

I would say to the minister, and this is why I'm very disappointed and I think many people are disappointed today, that she has it within her power to allow these individuals in Ontario — actually, what she would be doing is allowing these individuals to create their own

I think when two people, two loving individuals, want to be given that opportunity, they should not be denied that opportunity by this House. That is exactly what the minister is doing, denying many individuals the opportunity to form their own families. I can't for the life of me understand why the minister is getting in the way, why the minister is preventing these individuals from moving forward.

Admittedly, there aren't thousands of people out there — there may be hundreds of people out there — who are looking to adopt children from around the world. The Hague convention permits these adoptions to take place and furthermore ensures the protection of children. That's why this is so important, that's why we need to ratify this piece of legislation, so we can ensure that children are protected, that there are not going to be abuses taking place either in the host countries or here in Ontario. No one wants to see that happen.

At the same time, by not ratifying this bill, we are precluding those families from adopting children in those countries to which the Hague convention applies. There are many countries to which the Hague convention applies. The minister has suggested that there are very few cases that we're dealing with. There are many countries that have signed the convention. I've got the list in front of me: total number of ratifications, 21; total number of signatories, 33. And the list is growing, by the way. So we're not talking about a small number of cases. We're talking about a significant number of opportunities that are being missed.

This bill is truly about children and their protection. It's about children like Irena Evangelista, who is here this morning in the members' gallery. Hi, Irena. Sam and Sabina — she is their child — who are my constituents came to me and told me about the difficult situation they found themselves in, the kinds of delays and roadblocks that were being put in their way. It was as a result of a press conference that was held, and my colleague the member for Windsor-Walkerville and I intervened on their

The Deputy Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Further debate?

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I want to congratulate

the member for Lawrence for bringing this piece of legis-

lation before the House. As many members will know, this

is a subject that is very dear to my heart, since my wife

Aime and I have a little girl named Tianan, whose Chinese

name is Tiantian, who is from Yangzhou, China. She is

four years old and is a wonderful addition to our family.

We were fortunate as a family to have the opportunity

to travel to China and bring home a wonderful addition to

our family. So we are now members of a group in the

Sault Ste Marie area called Canadapop, which is a very

large group locally. There are about 30 children. It's a

veritable United Nations of children from every nation

and the children all know each other and enjoy each

other's company. They are, all of them, not only wonder-

ful additions to the families to which they belong, but to

our whole community.

The experiences of the parents in making these adop-

tions are very wide and different and varying. In our case,

we had the opportunity to work with an organization

called Children's Bridge, which arranges adoptions of

Chinese children. It was relatively quick and we were very

fortunate. However, other parents who have adopted from

eastern Europe, Latin America, have not had the same

experience. They have in many cases experienced long-

term delays. In some cases — thank goodness, only a few

that I'm aware of — they've had to deal with private

adoption individuals and groups in these countries, some-

times involving members of the legal profession, some-

times involving members of the health care community,

and have found that they may have in some cases spent a

great deal of money and found that they did not in the end

have the opportunity to bring a little boy or a little girl

home. That is very tragic.

In other cases, they haven't had that terrible experi-

ence, but they've had enormously long delays. It's taken

years for them to get the final approval to bring home a

child and they have found that they've had to spend even

more money than they might have originally anticipated it

was going to take. In many cases, these are people who

desire to have a child so much that in some ways they are

vulnerable to exploitation by those who might not have

their best interests, or the best interests of the children, at

heart. That's why it's so important for the Hague conven-

tion to be ratified.

Along with the member for Lawrence and the member

for Windsor-Walkerville, I've been trying to put pressure

on the minister for some time to have the Hague conven-

tion ratified. Over the last couple of years I've had consid-

erable correspondence with the Minister of Community

and Social Services about the Hague convention. Most

recently, I have received a copy of a letter that she signed

in which she says: "As I have indicated in earlier corre-

spondence, this government supports the Hague conven-

tion on intercountry adoption and it is my intention to

introduce intercountry adoption legislation as quickly as

were caught up in this bureaucratic nightmare.

Of course the minister at that time agreed to go along

with it and, yes, the minister has suggested to me that in

principle she agrees with the ratification of the Hague

convention. However, that's not good enough, because we

have as of yet not seen this convention being brought

forward in this House to be ratified. As a result, there are

many other families that are being denied the same

opportunity the Evangelistas were given as a result of that

memorandum of understanding. They are being denied the

opportunity to create, to form, their families. I can think of

no other thing we could do that is worse than that, to

prevent people who desire to do so from forming their own

families.

I say to the minister, and I don't say this in a partisan

way, I just cannot understand for the life of me why we

have not ratified this act. So I would appeal to all mem-

bers of this House: Put the bureaucratic niceties away.

Don't be bamboozled by the arguments you have been

given that somehow there need to be changes to the Child

and Family Services Act before we ratify the Hague con-

vention. Don't allow yourselves to be taken in by that kind

of discussion, because it is not necessary. This is stand-

alone legislation. This bill would ensure that the adoption

process would proceed. It would ensure the protection of

children. It would ensure that we could move forward, and

at the same time would not preclude the minister from

moving forward with her own program, with her own

changes to the Child and Family Services Act, whatever

those may be. I am a little concerned that as of today I

have not heard the minister really and truly explain what's

getting in her way. It's beyond reason.

Therefore, today I would again, on behalf of the Evan-

gellistas and on behalf of many of those families who

would like to adopt and who are being prevented from

doing so, implore members to support this piece of legis-

lation. I ask you to do that because this is one of those rare

times when we could, as individual members, reach out

and help people directly, and that's what I'm asking you to

do. It's nothing more. These families are not asking for

anything. They're not asking for resources. This is not

going to cost any additional dollars. They are not asking

for the state, the government, to help them raise their

families. They're simply asking for the chance to

create and form their own families. I can think of nothing

that is more desirable than that for our province to fully be

behind and support.

I ask each and every one of you to dig deep down inside

and think about those families, think about those children.

That's what we're here to do today, and I ask you to sup-

port my bill.

the legislative agenda allows." That's dated September 4, 1998.

The important phrase in this is "as quickly as the legislative agenda allows." The minister repeatedly says she

says, "It will happen as soon as possible, as quickly as possible." The question is, when? Thirteen countries have

ratified the convention, that I am aware of. There may be

more.

Mr Cordiano: Thirty-three now.

Mr Wildman: Thirty-three now? OK. In Canada,

British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the Northwest

Territories have all passed enabling legislation. Ontario

hasn't done that. The minister keeps saying she supports

the convention, but it hasn't happened.

We want to ensure that children adopted abroad and

brought to this country are going to find loving homes that

will fulfill their lives and fulfill the lives of their parents.

We don't want to allow exploitation of these children. We

want to ensure that they are protected, both in the host

country, in Canada and in Ontario. All of us want that.

That's why we need the legislation.

I would mention, though, that it's important to recog-

nize that there are countries that are not signatories to the

convention and from which many children are adopted into

Canada. China, the home country of our little girl, Tiana,

is one of them. China has not signed the convention.

Neither has Russia, two major nations around the world.

I think legislation that is brought in will have to not

only ratify the convention and implement the central

authority called for in the treaty, but also ensure that

adoptions for countries that are not signatories to the

convention are regulated properly as well. I would hope

that we could move forward quickly.

This is not a partisan issue, it really isn't, and I don't

believe the minister believes it's a partisan issue. All of

us, whatever political party we are from, recognize that

there are loving parents, or potential parents, who want to

have children and want to provide loving, nurturing homes

for those children, and there are many, many children

around the world who need that love and care. We should

be doing everything we can to facilitate that, to make it

possible, to protect the children and protect the interests of

the families in general.

Ratifying the convention is a move in the right direction

in Canada. We now have to implement it. We have to do

it. We also have to ensure that children being adopted

from countries which are not signatories to the convention

are protected and that the parents involved in adoptions in

those countries are protected.

We have a wonderful opportunity here to move forward

and to express our collective will as legislators in Ontario

representing the people of this province, to say: "We

believe we should be helping these families. We should be

ensuring that they are not exploited, that they don't face

inordinate delays, that we are helping these children who

can so enrich the lives of their parents, of their families

and of their communities." We should be helping these

children have the opportunities they would never have if

there weren't loving parents in Ontario who wanted to

care for them.

1020

I think about the situation in China where there are so

many little girls every year who need to be adopted. The

official line is somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000

little girls every year in China. The reality is probably

many, many times that. There are many parents who

would like to have the opportunity to care for one of those

little girls and to make her one of their own, part of their

family. That's true in many other countries.

We have an enormous opportunity here to act in con-

cert on behalf of the children, on behalf of the families, to

protect them and their parents. I again congratulate my

friend from Lawrence for bringing this matter before the

House and hope that members from all parties would

support it.

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): I appreciate the

opportunity this morning to make a few comments on the

bill from the member for Lawrence in adopting the Hague

convention. I think it's worthwhile to look at a little his-

tory. The Hague convention that governs international

adoptions was passed in 1993. At this point in time, only

19 countries have signed on to the Hague convention. It is

a very complex issue, this whole area of international

adoptions. The federal government is involved in the

granting of visa status and so on. The provincial govern-

ments are involved.

The situation in Romania I agree was intolerable. We

ran into bureaucracy at the provincial level, the federal

level, the Romanian bureaucracy. The rules got changed in

the process of the game and about 31 constituents, one of

whom was mine, were negatively impacted. We now of

course have signed a memorandum of understanding with

Romania. Hopefully that particular issue involving those

31 families is over. We do need to go further.

Mr Cordiano's bill, very well intentioned, unfortunately

only deals with about 20% of the intercountry adoptions

that affect the people of Ontario because the Hague con-

vention involves so few countries. So 80% of the inter-

country adoptions that we process through Ontario will

not be covered under the terms of this bill or under the

Hague convention.

It would be wise if the government of the day addressed

the complete issue instead of a small piece of the issue

because the whole area of international adoptions is one

that is growing as we become more aware of children in

other countries of the world who are starving, who are not

being treated properly. We have people in our country

who would love to provide them with good homes and

adoptions is growing and it is becoming more and more

complicated. I have constituents of mine involved in an

adoption from China that is very complex, that they're

having struggles with.

It would be wise if the government of the day looked at

the entire issue and said, "Let's bring forward some leg-

islation that not only deals with the issue of the Hague

ratify the Hague convention — I'll remind members of the House six out of 10 Canadian jurisdictions now have ratified. There are 33 signatories to this convention. I'll remind members that this convention protects both the children in their native countries and Canadian families adopting. The member for Lawrence and I brought these families here. That day the minister said they had finally signed a memorandum of understanding and that they were prepared to bring forward legislation. That was in late March, early April.

The member for Algoma presented us with a letter to-day saying the minister supports and is prepared to ratify the convention as soon as the legislative agenda will allow it. The House leader of the official opposition and the House leader of the NDP I believe have made it unequivocal that stand-alone legislation will get rapid passage in this House. It is now October of 1998 and Ontario families attempting to adopt from various countries that are signatories or have ratified — 21 have actually ratified — are still faced with the same kinds of problems.

The Lecours have their baby now, due in large measure to political interventions by a number of people. Their baby came to Canada in July of this year. It was an absolutely wonderful celebration. There is no reason why this convention ought not to be ratified by the province of Ontario today. Everybody agrees it's good public policy, everybody agrees it's in the interests of the children, everybody agrees it's in the interests of the adopting families and I for the life of me don't understand why we haven't ratified it.

1030

My colleague from Lawrence, Mr Cordiano, has brought forward a bill. I'm pleased to hear that the government members will support this bill. I hope the government will bring forward stand-alone legislation to deal with the Hague convention, legislation that's distinct from other amendments to the Child and Family Services Act so that it can get speedy passage by this Legislature.

Families attempting to adopt children from other countries go through an absolute nightmare. The family I dealt with, even once the memorandum of understanding had been in place, it turned out afterwards had been dealing with an unlicensed private adoption agency in Romania, paying US\$1,000 a month to keep their child, and almost lost the adoption because of that. Again, it was political intervention by the Deputy Prime Minister of this country that allowed that baby to come here, through direct discussions with the Prime Minister of Romania.

It is in everyone's interests, and I believe members on the government side of the House share our concerns that Ontario become a signatory and ratify the Hague convention. It stands to reason that Ontario should sign the bill. Most of the families that have been affected by this are in Ontario. I believe there were 35 families in Canada in total and 34 of them, as I recollect, are here in Ontario. We've had happy endings to some long and difficult struggles in the last three months. There can be many more happy endings.

To make a long story short, this process continued for almost four months. My colleague from Lawrence, Mr Cordiano, and I were working with constituents, as I know a number of other members were, with respect to this issue. Finally in March, having asked repeatedly for the government to bring forward stand-alone legislation to

memorandum of understanding was in place.

It wasn't till later that day that I found out no time that Ontario had a memorandum of understanding in place. It wasn't till later that day that I found out no time that Ontario had a memorandum of understanding in place. It wasn't till later that day that I found out no time that Ontario had a memorandum of understanding in place. It wasn't till later that day that I found out no time that Ontario had a memorandum of understanding in place.

On January 3, I called the Minister of Community and Social Services and the minister responded immediately. At that point in time the minister expressed a great deal of empathy and understanding for the plight of my constituents and I was very pleased by the minister's response. I suspect the minister herself had not been properly briefed by her officials because she had indicated to me at the time that Ontario had a memorandum of understanding in place. It wasn't till later that day that I found out no time that Ontario had a memorandum of understanding in place. It wasn't till later that day that I found out no time that Ontario had a memorandum of understanding in place.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): I'm pleased to join the debate. I first became involved in this debate on January 2 of this year when constituents of mine called me with respect to their situation. Anne and Greg Lecours had begun the process of adopting a baby from Romania in early 1996. After two years of bureaucratic struggles and difficulties of every sort imaginable, the Lecours came to the conclusion that they needed the intervention and assistance of members of Parliament, regardless of political stripe. We ought not to make this a partisan issue, quite frankly, because I respect the views of other members of the House.

Mr Cordiano's intention. We think it's an admirable one. We all agree with it. We just believe that we need to go further and possibly his bill will be some impetus for us to go further. We would expect complete, quick support by all members of the opposition when that legislation does come forward.

We're not going to oppose the legislation. What I would like to see and what I assume will happen now is that as a result of the conversation from the opposition and the unequivocal support from the third party, should the government introduce some legislation in the near future that deals with 100% of the issue regarding intercountry adoptions rather than just 20%, the members of the opposition parties will see fit at that time to endorse that legislation that may be put forward by the government and give unanimous support to quick passage of that legislation through this body.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Kingston and The Islands, come to order.

Mr Carroll: It's interesting that the member for Lawrence would talk about an opportunity that doesn't present itself that often in our House for all of us to agree on. There's no question that all of us agree on the intent of this legislation. It also is obvious that the legislation should go a little further and encompass all intercountry adoptions.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): Do

I hope and I believe the government is sincere, and I know the minister is because I spoke to the minister myself on a number of occasions about this, that Ontario should ratify this, and that's important.

I should point out to members, because none of my colleagues have, that in the case of Romanian adoptions it's the government of Romania that's insisting on provincial ratification of the terms of the Hague convention. Canada has ratified it but the Romanians correctly understand that adoption is a matter of provincial jurisdiction and they are the ones insisting on the ratification by each of the provinces.

I applaud my colleague from Lawrence on his efforts, not only on behalf of his constituents but on behalf of many other families in Ontario that have been caught in this bind. I'm pleased to support this important bill and I hope the government is sincere in saying that it will bring forward stand-alone legislation that will allow Ontario to ratify the terms of the Hague convention. It's in the interests of the kids, it's in the interest of Ontario's adopting families and it just makes good sense.

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): I'm very enthusiastic to be able to join my colleague Bud Wildman from Algoma in support of this bill.

I say to the parliamentary assistant, speaking on behalf of the government undoubtedly from a script, that this is a very fundamental human rights issue. We're talking about the rights of young children who find themselves without parents in their own country, and I don't have to explain to you the conditions they find themselves in more often than not. We're talking about the most basic of human rights for the most vulnerable and the youngest of victims of major catastrophes, of major social unrest, and yes, of violence and warfare.

You suggest to us that somehow this has to be put into a time frame, that somehow it has to be done at a point when it's convenient for the government. I understand what you say when you say that there are a number of jurisdictions internationally — it's been noted that Russia and China are two of them — that are not signatories to this convention. It's also been noted that federally Canada is, but because the jurisdiction of the province is in contrast to the constitutional jurisdiction of the federal government, it remains incumbent upon each province to adopt the convention as well.

I find it difficult to understand why the government doesn't want to somehow defer the interests of these children until it's, let's say, politically convenient for them. You've got time today. This is the opportunity for members of this Legislature, for government backbenchers not to follow the marching orders from the Premier's office and to say that they are far more interested in and far more concerned about the welfare of young, parentless, vulnerable children internationally than they are about some sort of political agenda or political timing at which the government might be able to obtain, let's say, a preferable spin, or perhaps the embarrassment that it was an opposition member who had to bring this matter forward, that it wasn't the government that took the initiative and said,

"Let's put Ontario on record as being fully in support of this Hague convention on the rights of adopted children." I've got to tell you I've been blessed in my own family. I've been blessed with siblings and with other close family members who are members of my family or I'm a member of their family by virtue of adoption. Kim, who will undoubtedly read the Hansard or is watching this now, will understand what I'm saying, as will Sam.

I understand the incredible burden and incredible hurts that families across this province and this country go through out of their desire to bring a child into their life and to share their family with a child and to make that child their own, from any number of places in the world. There are families — I could speak very specifically about families in Welland-Thorold, in Pelham and across Niagara region — who have gone to great lengths at great expense and at great emotional cost to themselves to ensure that a young child from, again, any number of places in the world, a child whose life otherwise would be one of abandonment and one of total displacement, can become part of a family and grow and be nurtured and be a son or a daughter and a sister and a brother and a grandson and a granddaughter in a loving, caring family.

It's incredibly important that government backbenchers understand that here in this private member's hour is an opportunity for them to finally break free from the marching orders of the Premier's office. They've got a chance to say to families in Ontario that they care about the rights of adopted children and potential adoptees across the world and that they care about the families who go to those great lengths to bring them into their families. They can support this bill today and make Ontario a signatory to this convention.

Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York): It is a pleasure to rise today and support in principle the private member's Bill 23, An Act to implement The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption. I want to congratulate my colleague for bringing this matter to our attention today because it deals with one of our most precious resources, our children. Most specifically, it deals with parents by choice and the challenges they face when dealing with intercountry adoption.

I first became aware of the many issues surrounding intercountry adoption when constituents in my riding of Durham-York came to me in frustration. They asked me to help them unravel the complicated process of adopting a child from another country. While trying to assist these people in their endeavours, it became apparent to me that there is strong need for co-operation in creating a legislative framework which would support families faced with these challenges.

All children have the right to grow up in a safe, loving and permanent home. We all know that frequent movement of children from one temporary placement to another is detrimental to their well-being and development. As a society, it is our responsibility to protect our children from neglect or harm.

health, nurturing environment while others may have suffered from emotional or physical deprivation. These same families realize that they must learn to nurture that multicultural process through the many years of family life.

It is my hope that no adoptive family, particularly a family adopting internationally, will have to search endlessly for information vital to the health and well-being of their children. Parents and parents-to-be of children of another culture have a unique opportunity to grow with their children as they build the bridge between the family of origin and the family of choice. We have to help to create a secure and level playing field for these parents by having said that, I will be supporting Bill P-73 in principle because I feel that as a government we need to do everything we can to simplify this process while still protecting children and their families by choice in Ontario.

Mr Gerretsen: I get very concerned when I hear the parliamentary assistant and the member for Durham-York taking about supporting in principle. We've got a bill here that's a very simple bill. It is exactly a page and a half. I know it's got an addendum of the actual convention attached to it, but it's a page and a half. It's eight sections long and there's only one section that really matters, and that is the fact that the Minister of Community and Social Services becomes the minister as the central authority that is required under the convention.

Why don't you do the right thing, give this bill second reading today and let's do something really unprecedented, give it third reading as well? We did it earlier this week with the school closures. We all agreed in this House at that point in time that it was the right thing to do to get the kids back in school. If everybody really believes that it's the right thing to do and that we approve this concept, the adoption of the Hague convention in principle, let's give it third reading. There's nothing complicated about the bill.

I get sick and tired of hearing the argument, "Well, the bill only deal with 20% of the intercountry adoption." OK, we'll make it easier for that 20% and we'll deal with the other 80% later on when the minister comes in with more comprehensive legislation. Why don't we make it at least easier for the 20% of intercountry adoptions that are taking place right now in Ontario and become a signatory and adopt the Hague convention?

That's all that's requested here. It doesn't require a lot of study or further detail. The bill is very simple in concept. It merely asks this Legislative Assembly to adopt it on behalf of the Ontario, then we're done with it. We don't have to adopt it in principle. We adopt it in practice and make it so much easier for wanted children to come into this country and become part of loving and nurturing families. We have all heard stories of how adoptions have changed families, and it has changed my own family. I have a sister who was adopted some 40 years ago. She was seven years old when she came into our family and the joy and the pleasure that she brought to our family and

Over the last decade, throughout the world a number of international legal instruments have been adopted in response to the growing concerns that we need to promote and protect the rights of children. In order to help individuals and organizations working at national and local levels, it is important to compile relevant international standards for the legal and social defence of children worldwide.

The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption is one of these instruments that my colleague has put forward today in Bill 23. The goal of this convention is to establish a cooperative adoption process between countries to protect the best interests of children and birth and adoptive parents. It was ratified by Canada and came into force on April 1, 1997. As the subject matter of the convention falls within provincial jurisdiction, provinces are also required to ratify the convention.

The government of Ontario supports the Hague convention and is looking at ways to implement it as quickly as possible through legislation. I am also aware that 80% of intercountry adoptions by Ontario families involve countries that are not signatories to this convention.

Because the Hague convention only deals with fewer than 20% of intercountry adoptions undertaken by Ontario residents, the Ontario government is looking at a more comprehensive legislative approach that would address the broader range of intercountry adoption issues and concerns.

Some countries — Romania has been mentioned this morning. It has ceased to process adoptions within jurisdictions that have not ratified the Hague convention. Because Ontario has not yet implemented the convention, this has caused some families in Ontario delays as well as a great deal of anguish and frustration. In the meantime, I am pleased to say that we have signed a memorandum of understanding with the Romanian government which will allow Ontario families who were waiting to adopt Romanian children as of June 1997 to finalize these adoptions in Romania.

But I think we have to pay attention to the broader issue: that we live in a world where parents, and particularly adoptive parents, must learn new parenting approaches. They are constantly looking for tools that work. These same families recognize the challenges they face as multicultural international adoptees. Some of these children come to their adoptive parents with little or no background on their biological families or their early life experiences. Some may have spent their early years in a

continue to do, and hopefully we to her — she has become a completely integral part of our family.

If we can just help even one Ontario family to speed up this process, I think we're doing the right thing. Let us not get caught up in the bureaucratic clatter of, "We've got to look at this problem from this side and that side." We can actually help individual families by simply adopting this bill and actually giving it third reading today if we're all in agreement. It's an uncomplicated bill, and I know it doesn't deal with all the other problems that are out there that we may have with respect to countries that are not signatories of the Hague convention, but at least we've started doing the right thing for the families that are directly affected by this.

What we're talking about here is a basic human rights issue. We shouldn't be talking about government and bureaucratic inconvenience. It is about the basic human rights of children who perhaps are unwanted in their home countries to have families and of wanting families to have the children they so desperately need to fulfil their own happiness in this world.

It's interesting to note that the Ministry of Community and Social Services actually has a Web site in which they talk quite extensively about international adoptions. As a matter of fact, that Web site goes on for some 94 pages. One of the interesting sections, on page 8 of the Ontario government Web site, is the area that deals with the Hague convention on intercountry adoptions.

This is the ministry's own Web site. It states:

"Canada ratified the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption on December 19, 1996, which entered into force on April 1, 1997. The convention extends to five provinces: British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island." It's interesting that the Ontario government doesn't say anything about the fact that Ontario hasn't signed on to this as yet or hasn't adopted the convention. "Each of those jurisdictions" — those jurisdictions rather than our own jurisdictions — "has designated a central authority to discharge the duties under the convention. The National Adoption Desk has been designated the federal central authority under the convention. Its role focuses on coordinating the implementation of the convention and facilitating communication between central authorities in Canada and abroad."

The ministry is putting out this information and basically saying to the people of Ontario and other people who have access to this Web site: "Five other provinces are doing it right. They've adopted the convention. They are part of the system and we aren't."

I think it's somewhat telling. I'm not sure what that means, whether the persons in the ministry who actually put this on the Web site really are trying to give somebody a message that maybe we should be part of it. In any event, I would urge people who are interested in international adoptions to engage this particular Web site — it's at www.gov.on.ca — and get this information. You're not

only doing yourself a favour, not only making your own life more complete and fulfilled, but you may also be helping someone else, a young child in a country elsewhere.

I once again urge the members of this assembly, let us give this bill second reading, and let us take that very unprecedented step that we've already taken once this week. Let's give it third reading today as well.

Mr John L. Parker (York East): I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to join this debate this morning. I speak in favour of this bill. I thank and congratulate the member for Lawrence for bringing this bill forward and for bringing this issue forward for debate today for us to discuss. I support this bill on second reading because I support the principle that the bill itself supports, that is, that there is a need for an international convention, an international protocol for adoptions between countries around the globe.

The Hague convention is a very important step in that direction. The Hague convention doesn't do it all. It would be wrong for us to assume that simply by adopting the Hague convention we would solve all the problems associated with international cross-border adoptions that we face here in Ontario today. The Hague convention is a first step, it's a necessary step and it's one that we should support and encourage to grow further.

In terms of the number of cross-border international adoptions in this province, to put this whole debate in some perspective, in 1996, the last year for which I have statistics, there were about 588 international adoptions in Ontario and about 20% of those have been affected by the Hague convention if the Hague convention had been in effect in Ontario at the time. That means, to use that year's figures as an average, about 120 adoptions would be affected if this legislation were to be implemented but the other 80% would be unaffected by this legislation. I say that to indicate that all the problems we face with international adoptions here in Ontario would not be solved by implementing the Hague convention. The lack of adoption of the Hague convention is not the reason for the difficulty faced by most people involved in international adoptions.

In supporting the bill in principle, I am not saying that I accept the bill per se in its present form. I'm not saying that I reject the bill in its present form. I just want to know a little bit more about the details.

The bill resembles in many respects the draft bill that was established by the Uniform Law Conference of Canada, but it is not identical to the draft bill in the uniform law conference. I'd like to know why it isn't identical, I'm sure there are good reasons why it's not identical, but those reasons have not been brought forward in the debate today. I think it's important that we go into those reasons. Obviously, the draft uniform law conference bill is not appropriate for implementation holus-bolus by each implementing jurisdiction. It needs to be adapted and made appropriate for each jurisdiction which enacts it. It's important that when we adapt it for our purposes here in Ontario, we adapt it correctly. I am not sure that we have had adequate debate on that particular aspect of it, so

ing to occur without negatively impacting patients, which data now indicate has not been the case; and

That the government must commit to community services being in place before hospitals or beds are closed; and That the government must strike an immediate independent review of the real impact from hospital and health

service restructuring on the quality of patient care.

Today is an important day. It's important for patients not just in Windsor but for patients right across Ontario. I am asking the MPPs, especially the government MPPs, to make a very difficult decision today. I'm asking you to forget party lines and vote for your constituents. I'm asking you to seriously consider the information we're presenting that will prove there is trouble with the restructuring process in Ontario. We have evidence to that effect and we need your support on this resolution.

My resolution is calling for three important things: improved funding in the hospital system — we're talking about operating dollars; we are requiring that sufficient capital dollars are supplied on a timely basis; and we need you to strike an immediate independent review to see exactly what the effects of restructuring are on the quality of patient care.

There's no question that the support of this resolution will be difficult for some. It would mean an admission that the restructuring process has not been without problems but that you are prepared to rectify the problems. It would mean standing up for your own community, standing up for those who have told you personally that you're having trouble in your own home town, that there are serious effects from sufficient dollars not being in place at the right time.

I want to welcome Windsors today. They're filling the public gallery. They got up at 4 o'clock this morning; they left on a bus at 5 o'clock in the morning; they trekked up the 401. I'm proud of you, because today you're representing all the Windsors, all the residents of Essex county who have been dealing with these issues for the last three years, minimum. Today you're representing other people in Ontario, other people who come from even farther away than Windsor, but I'm proud of you. I'm thrilled that you're here and I want you to be a witness to the fact that MPPs can cross party lines to support something that is important to their own community. I thank you for being here today.

I have to tell you that Windsor is one of the hardest-hit communities, thanks to cuts to hospital budgets and this restructuring process. At this point today our hospitals in Windsor have lost \$41.3 million. Any announcements of reinvestment have just not materialized. The result of that is that this past summer alone, 230 times during the months of July and August and the first week of September, we had ambulances in our Windsor hospitals that could not discharge their patients into the emergency rooms because the rooms in emergency were in gridlock; they couldn't move.

Let me tell you why this is so staggering and why I urge you to support the resolution. In 1997, if you recall, we released the report that the Ministry of Health had

there's certainly more work to be done on this bill before it can go to third reading and I encourage that work to go forward.

I have a letter here from Beryl Mercer, the founder of the Saint Anne Adoption Centre in Stratford, Ontario, someone who is very experienced in matters of this sort. This letter is very supportive, again, of the principle that is represented by this bill, but it does indicate, "I would like to encourage you not to implement the Hague convention in Ontario at this time." It goes on to indicate that Alberta and Manitoba have implemented the Hague convention. They've had problems with the nature of the implementation and it is very important that when —

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. The member's time has expired.

The mover of the motion has two minutes to respond.

Mr Cordiano: I want to thank all the members who participated this morning in discussing my legislation, Bill 23. I want to go back, because I am pulling at the heartstrings of each member. I am appealing on an emotional level because I think that's what this requires, that you see beyond the bureaucratic niceties, that you see beyond the kinds of difficulties that may exist.

There aren't that many. It pertains more to the government's unwillingness to fit this into an agenda that's pre-conceived and predetermined and this probably doesn't fit into your timetable. But this would not preclude the minister from moving ahead with other reforms to the Child and Family Services Act. By the way, to those members who have suggested that this only deals with 20% of adoptions, I remind them that each and every day there are more countries that are not only becoming signatories to the convention but are ratifying the convention.

Again I want to say this is about children. I talked earlier about my own children. I am blessed by the fact that I have two beautiful daughters, Lara and Natalie, and I want to wish my daughter Lara a happy birthday because it is her birthday today.

On behalf of all the children this deals with, I would say to members, please allow this to go through, bring it to third reading, and Ontario will be a ratifier of the Hague convention. I don't think we should, as a jurisdiction, be relegated to the position of some other countries which have not ratified this. Let's be a leader.

1100

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): I

move: That in the opinion of this House, the government must immediately improve funding in the hospital and health system to alleviate major gaps that have developed, evidenced by chronic gridlock in emergency rooms, lack of sufficient nursing staff and massive debt being accumulated by hospitals; and

That the government must ensure that sufficient capital dollars are supplied on a timely basis to allow restructuring-

none itself — this is over a year ago — an internal audit of the emergency rooms, which our Windsorites will remember well. At that time it described the emergency room as “a gridlock,” that “the care is fragmented and delayed.” It said, “There are significant unacceptable delays to the transfer of care from the ambulance service to emergency unit staff.” That is your confidential ministry report from over a year ago. I am telling you that this past summer 230 times ambulances could not discharge their patients into emergency because the situation has not changed.

Our Minister of Health was in Windsor on June 15. She promised that by the end of the summer she would make an announcement regarding the operating dollars of our hospitals. We are now at October 1. No announcement has been made; nothing has been done to rectify this. Today we are facing the same gridlock, the same unacceptable delays, not just in our emergency rooms but throughout our hospital and health system. I need your support of this resolution.

Just in case you thought this severe financial crisis was just hitting the Windsor area, let me tell you that today's resolution is being supported by the Ontario Hospital Association, which represents 198 hospitals in Ontario. What they are telling us is that, as per the second annual report that will be released shortly, over 50% of Ontario hospitals are facing deficits or accumulated debt. What this tells us is that they cannot manage the process that you are putting on them. The timing is wrong, the funds are not coming through in the right time frame and in the right place, and we need your help.

The OHA is telling you that you need to review how you are making this restructuring happen. They have said there is no question that hospitals in Ontario are facing extremely serious funding problems. These deficits are likely to be in excess of \$200 million in this fiscal year. This is a serious financial crisis that our hospitals have been placed in.

I'd like to mention the Hamilton hospital, and my colleague will detail that further. They say, “There is a need for open debate on the finances of the health care system.” The Hamilton Health Sciences Corp is facing massive debt and I'm saying to the members who come from that region that they must support the resolution, they must encourage their minister to come forward with funding in a timely fashion. You must front-end-load those investments before you force these cuts and closures on your community. We know that your constituency offices are hearing about real patient issues, just as mine are.

When I look in the gallery today, I see some of the people here who've waited in emergency rooms. They are the ones who witnessed the time delays, the nurses scrambling, knowing that they needed more help. Our patient video that we released last spring shows Lyle Browning witnessing the departing of patients on the ward. The nurses would not have the time to take these people to the bathroom, so they dispersed them. Lyle Browning is a retired businessman who paid taxes all his life and cannot

believe the situation that his health system that he waited for is in, that he knew should have been there waiting for him. Many, many people have been facing the same consequence. Cambridge Memorial Hospital is facing a \$2.2-million deficit this year. The Cambridge hospital has made its member well aware of the issues. I expect support from that Cambridge MPP, because his community requires it.

The Belleville General Hospital has supported this resolution. I ask the member from Belleville what is happening in his community and what does he owe his constituents when we come forward for a vote on this second ballot item today at 12 noon.

From St Thomas Elgin General Hospital, Mr Kondrat gladly supports the resolution. What strife and financial crisis is this hospital in because the timing of sufficient resources has not been there. It's not working like you said it might work.

The London Health Sciences Centre, the massive hospitals of London — we from Windsor envy the teaching centres in London — are looking at a \$2.5-million deficit this year. They launched a postcard campaign last year, the result of which was a one-time grant. The truth of the matter is that in this fiscal year they're in the same financial bind. I expect London area MPPs to stand up for their area, because we know how cash-strapped that are and that it's affecting patient care. Every dollar that hospitals spend on financing costs is a dollar that is not spent on nurses. That cost is growing and, as the Ontario Hospital Association is forwarding, it is growing at a rampant pace, an expected \$200 million of servicing fees and debt load because the government has not funded it in an appropriate time frame.

We have heard from the Clinton Public Hospital, Leamington District Memorial Hospital, the Louise Marshall Hospital, the Palmerston and District Hospital, St John's Rehabilitation Hospital, Riverside Health Care Facilities, the Pembroke General Hospital and the Kingston General Hospital. There are area MPPs from this region today. I insist that you support this resolution, because the people in the area of Kingston understand full well what has happened. The list goes on. Our own hospital in Windsor, Hotel-Dieu Grace, is facing a \$5-million deficit this year and the Minister of Health broke her promise to come back to Windsor by the end of the summer for an announcement.

We need the support of all MPPs in the House today. We need you to cross your party line. We need you to stand up for the people you represent.

1110

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): I too want to welcome constituents from the Windsor and Essex county community to the Legislature to watch this debate today.

We in the Windsor community are proud of our legacy when it comes to health care. I remember when I was growing up, as many people here will, the Windsor medical plan, which was the forerunner of the Ontario hospital insurance plan. That's a legacy we can all be proud of.

at work and broke her ankle. She was going to require surgery so she had to be admitted into the hospital. It took three days before an operating room was finally freed up and she was able to have that operation. But while she was there she experienced the shortage of doctors to handle the workload, the shortage of operating room availability, inappropriate nursing staff levels, low morale among the remaining staff and not enough staff to maintain appropriate levels of cleanliness. She was in the hospital and experienced severe consequences because she couldn't get an operating room. One has to wonder how that is going to improve efficiencies in our hospitals if people are forced to stay there longer because operating room space isn't available.

Our community also generously donated to complete Malden Park Continuing Care Centre. That was a centre that had been promised by previous governments. In fact, I think Tory governments had promised that hospital to our community many years ago, but it was the NDP government that finally built that hospital and delivered it to our community. It's a hospital the future of which is in severe jeopardy because of the work of the hospital closing commission and their recommendations in Windsor. We feel and that's a threat that that facility is going to be privatized, and that's a threat we want to fight.

This is a motion that I will be supporting. Who couldn't support a motion that calls for improved funding and sufficient capital dollars to be supplied to communities for health care? But one has to ask oneself how a Liberal government would deliver on that promise. The NDP government has considered the issue of public health care and has issued a report. It's called Condition Critical: The Future of Quality Health Care in Ontario. I urge people to contact my office if they'd like a copy of that report.

We're having a by-election in Nickel Belt today. Blain Morton is fighting to protect public health care as the NDP candidate. He's pointing out in his campaign that even though the Liberals promised that they're going to improve the quality of health care, they failed to say how they're going to do it because they're not going to do anything about the Tory tax scheme. That's something that voters are going to be looking at carefully leading up to the next election.

I thank the member for doing what she can to fight to defend public health care in our community and the rest of Ontario. I have some questions about how that is going to be delivered but I'm happy to join her in those efforts today.

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): It's my pleasure to join the debate today and also to welcome the people from Windsor here today to have an opportunity to listen to the other side of the story and to hear what's happening in health care in this province. I know the member for Windsor-Sandwich talks about funding in her resolution. I think it's important to look back to a quote from September 22, 1996, when her leader, Dalton McGuinty, said, "I am convinced that there is enough money in the health system." That was when this government was spending \$17.8 billion on health

We were in the forefront when it came to hospital and health care reconfiguration in our community. Everyone will recall the Essex county Win-Win model, a report that was prepared after much community consultation and presented to the then minister, Ruth Grier, and the NDP government. That was a government that committed to our community that any savings that were going to result from the reconfiguration of our health care system were going to be reinvested back into our community — community services that were going to be required when one hospital was going to be closed — and changes were going to be taking place in the system. But we all know what happened to that plan.

In June 1995, when the current government was elected, all of those commitments that had been made by the former NDP government were thrown out the window. Now, day by day, we see reports in our newspapers of the crisis in health care and the long waits in the emergency rooms. Like the member for Windsor-Sandwich, I too get reports in my office and letters and phone calls from constituents who are concerned that this government is not only going too far too fast, but going in the wrong direction when it comes to their policies on health care.

I spoke to Lin Murphy about the subject matter we're debating today. She's saying that there is a lack of accountability in the system. Once a person is admitted into the hospital they have to wait for services such as pain medication and personal care. Hospital stays are less and patients are being turned out into the community a lot faster. We all know that. By and large, it is not a bad policy to have people in hospitals for a less amount of time. What has happened in our community, as in others, is that they're being sent out into a community that really doesn't have the services out there right now to adequately provide for them.

Right now we're having a strike with the community care access centre administrative workers. They have said that enough is enough and have drawn a line in the sand and are saying, "We are going to fight to protect the public health care we have always enjoyed in the Windsor area." They're fighting for fair wages, for job security and to protect public health care.

I commend June Muir and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, who are fighting on behalf of not only their workers in Windsor but on behalf of everyone in Ontario who appreciates public health care and the benefits that it provides.

We fear this government's agenda is leading towards privatization and we see that in our hospitals as well. I received a phone call from a Paul Micallef who said that he had a cataract operation recently and was required to pay user fees of \$185.

We know that patients now have to pay for fibreclass casts because even though you can get a plaster cast without charge, they're never available. So you have to pay for casts.

I received a letter recently from a Paulette Kupnicki who talked about the time that she went to Windsor Regional Hospital, metropolitan campus, because she fell

also sent out a press release talking about the member for Durham West, the Minister of Community and Social

you don't want waiting lists in emergency rooms, and you're saying that things haven't gone perfectly but we have a chance to fix them.

I applaud the member for Windsor-Sandwich. I say to the government members, use your facts properly. Let's have a meaningful debate on health care and let's invest in our health care system and repair it so everybody benefits.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): It's certainly a pleasure for me to rise on this particular motion. Here we have a Liberal motion that's saying they need more money, that the only way to fix it is to put more money into it. For five years they spent and they spent and they spent —

Mr Crozier: Your minister promised the money. What are you talking about?

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Essex South, come to order.

Mr Galt: They doubled the budget; they doubled the spending. It's an old tax and spend and borrow philosophy that the Liberals have in this province. It didn't work in the late 1980s and it's not going to work in the 1990s.

It's interesting to note that our member just a moment ago talked about the health critic from York South, and a letter from that particular hospital said they really didn't want him there. He was trying to create a crisis and he was just playing games by going into the hospital. It was totally wrong and just not fair whatsoever to that hospital to go into it and do those kinds of things.

It's interesting to note that in the Sudbury Star they're talking about — this is just yesterday — "The Liberals are engaging in fearmongering, cheap electioneering. They offer no evidence to back up their claims, and their tactics are a disservice to the community."

A news release that the member for Windsor-Sandwich put out recently —

Mrs Pupatello: Hey, Galt, check your own hospital there, buddy. You want to call your hospital.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Member for Windsor-Sandwich, come to order.

Mr Galt: — claiming that she had the support of the Ontario Hospital Association and some 200 hospitals is totally incorrect, as we found out yesterday, as stated by Mr MacKinnon. He assured us in no unequivocal terms that the Ontario Hospital Association did not support Pupatello's resolution. How on earth could you mislead the public of this province when —

The Deputy Speaker: Take your seat. You must withdraw that. That is unparliamentary. You can't accuse another member of misleading the House.

Mr Galt: I withdraw, Madam Speaker.

In both cases, whether it be the critic or this particular resolution, it is creating a crisis in the province of Ontario. I have to wonder why the health critic isn't here. He's probably planning his fundraiser for this evening, charging hundreds of dollars to Liberals who believe what they're being told while this crisis is being created that they're trying to create. But I can understand why he's not here.

Services, and said that they ought to call her. They trust the Liberals to get a phone number right, you simply cannot trust their numbers on health.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): I want, first of all, to congratulate my colleague Sandra Pupatello, who has been the most passionate and outspoken critic of this government in the health care field of any member in this Legislature. This government talks about health care funding and how much they spend. Well, check your facts, boys and girls: Per capita spending in this province has gone down under your government. We're now second lowest in the country, second only to Alberta. That's no track record. I remember the now-Premier of Ontario in the election debate on Global television, broadcast far and wide, "We will close" — how many hospitals?

Mr Agostino: Zero.

Mr Duncan: "No hospitals," he said. "We will close 39 hospitals." Well, ladies and gentlemen, we've closed 39 hospitals now.

What the member's resolution is attempting to draw to your attention is that not only have you closed 39 hospitals, but you have reinvested hardly any of that money in community-based services. You talk a good game. You give press releases. As my colleague, who has fought passionately on this issue, has quite correctly said, there's no beef. The money doesn't flow. That's why we have waiting lists in our emergency rooms. That's why people can't get a doctor. That's why, if you need heart surgery in this province, you've got a waiting list.

Your jig is up. They see it clearly. Why won't you invest in your hospitals? The member from Scarborough spoke passionately, but he forgets to say that his own hospital supports this resolution. We have the letter right here.

This government is nothing but phony facts, phony figures, and tax cuts to the rich. If you were committed to health care, instead of Ontario being second last in per capita spending, this Legislature would agree to make us the highest per capita spending to address the crisis that confronts each and every one of us in our constituencies.

I'm delighted the NDP is joining in supporting this resolution.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Kensdale): On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I would like to hear from the Chair as to the appropriate use of the word "phony" in this

Legislature, because we have obviously been advised —

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. I'm on my feet. I don't agree with you on that. I don't think it's unparliamentary. Continue.

Mr Duncan: Let me finish by saying I'm delighted the NDP is joining in supporting this resolution, but I'll remind you that the NDP closed two hospitals in our city, they closed 8,000 hospital beds, and there were no reinvestments resulting.

I'm pleased to join in this debate. I challenge the government members to join in this. If you support this resolution, you're saying that you support Ontario having the highest per capita spending in health care, you're saying

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): You doubted the contributions corporations can make. What are you talking about?

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Hamilton Centre.

Mr Gale: He'd be embarrassed because they don't have a vision, embarrassed that the Liberal Party does not have a plan for health.

Down at the University Club would be an ideal place for the hepatitis C patients to go this evening just to see the kinds of games that are being played with this guest of honour, this guest of honour being the Honourable Allan Rock, a federal Liberal, first cousin to the provincial Liberals.

Mr Newman: Best friend.

Mr Gale: This is a friend. This is a person who has taken \$3 billion out of transfer payments, mostly for health care. This is a person who provides less than eight cents on every dollar spent on health care here in Ontario.

This is a person who refuses to help the hepatitis C patients in Ontario. This is a person who is the Liberal health critic's hero, the Honourable Allan Rock. The health critic tonight will be dancing with the federal health care executioner. He and Liberal Ontario will be hand in hand to keep money out of Ontario.

Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South): Cheek to cheek.

Mr Gale: Cheek to cheek. They'll be dancing very, very close.

It is most unfortunate that this resolution has been brought forward looking to spend more money. There is no way that I can support this particular resolution, one that's trying to create a crisis in health care in the province of Ontario.

Mr Agostino: I'm pleased to join the debate and to congratulate my colleague from Windsor-Sandwich for this resolution.

I find it unfortunate that the government members have spent all their time simply attacking our health critic, attacking the federal health minister, but not dealing with the real issue, and that is the crisis you have caused in health care. You have gone out of your way since you have taken office to totally dismantle health care in Ontario.

As you sit there with your arrogance and your cockiness, I ask you again to go back to the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition at that time, by Mike Harris, when he said to Robert Fisher on Global, "It is not my plan to close hospitals." Do you all remember that? Why don't you ask the 39 hospitals across Ontario if Mike Harris kept his promise?

If you want facts, let's deal with the situation in my own community of Hamilton-Wentworth. Let us deal with the reality. The Hamilton health corporation as of this week faces a \$38-million deficit. Scott Rowand, one of the few CEOs who had the courage to take on your government and whom you have not been able to browbeat and bully to death, said, "I don't know how to fix this problem other than an awful lot of closures and cuts to patient services." That is the head of the second-largest hospital

in this country who said that, not an opposition politician. You should listen.

In the first eight months of this year, on over 1,000 occasions, ambulances had to be diverted from Hamilton area emergency rooms because they were full. Think members for Hamilton Mountain and Hamilton West, were in the Spectator saying they are concerned about what has happened and they're going to speak to the Minister of Health. They're starting to realize what you have caused. We're hoping they will have the courage today to support this resolution, to put the partisan politics aside and understand what is happening to health care and to patients.

Your phony announcements, your money coming eight or 10 years from now, do not help the person waiting days and days in the emergency room for a bed. They do not help the senior who can't get surgery. They do not help the individual who can't get heart care.

This is what we're facing. I'm not sure you can sit there in good conscience and tell yourself that you've not had those calls, that you've not had those concerns, that you've not had those constituents come in and tell you that. You know it has happened. It has happened in your hospitals, in your community, but you're too busy playing and having your strings pulled by Mike Harris and the whiz kids in his office who will not give you the freedom today to vote on behalf of your constituents. You're going to walk away with your tails between your legs and wave the party flag while your constituents are waiting for emergency care, for surgery. That is shameful. That is disgraceful. You have caused this crisis, and I can tell you that you are going to pay one hell of a political price for what you've done to health care in Ontario.

I ask you again, have the courage to say no to the whiz kids and say yes to patients and health care in Ontario today.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): I'm very pleased to join the debate today on the Puparello resolution. I think there has been an awful lot of politics in this. The motive is the thing we should be examining. Why is this resolution here when it's been clearly stated on the record? The comments from the member for York South are clearly dismissed as a loose cannon, not a health critic, a loose cannon.

Let's look at my riding of Durham East. Respectfully, Dr Duncan Sinclair, the former dean of the Queen's University medical school, is restructuring health care. That restructuring, I might add, is to the credit of Frances Lankin. She started that when she was health minister and we're finishing the job. Of course it's displacing, and is a very difficult process. There's no question each of us wants to see the best level of health care in our community.

For the facts, it should be clear that Ontario spends \$1,638 per person on health care. It is the highest of any province in this country of Canada, the highest per-person expenditure compared to every other province and territory in Canada. In terms of physician services, Ontario

had had the benefit of providing the necessary care to that particular patient and then he had died, we would have done the best we could. We are not doing the best we can. We are not providing the best we can for the people of Ontario.

The resolution by the member for Windsor-Sandwich is more than timely because she's asking a very simple thing, what the people want. They've got the necessary care provided by their own government, and we don't have that. We used to be proud of the hospitals in our communities and the care we received at our hospitals. Today they are very fearful of wanting to go to the hospital because they know that care is no longer available.

When the member for Windsor-Sandwich says, "Let's find out where we stand with the health care system today and ask for an independent review," I think the members on the government side should say, "Let's do it." If they are so right that they are sinking so many billions of dollars into the health care system, then they shouldn't have any difficulty in supporting the resolution by the member for Windsor-Sandwich today. Let's find out what the people out there are saying about the quality of health care the people of Ontario are receiving today.

Hospitals are too busy today doing fundraising to apply time to give care to patients in their hospitals. They are too busy dealing with debts in the millions. Here you have the well-respected North York General Hospital and this is what they say: "There is no question that hospitals in Ontario are facing extremely serious funding problems. The Change Foundation report to be released shortly found that over half of Ontario hospitals are running deficits and these deficits are likely to be in excess of \$200 million per year."

So who is to blame here? Where are the millions of dollars they're saying they are sinking into the health care system? There is no reason not to support the resolution by the member for Windsor-Sandwich today.

Mr. Toni Skarica (Wentworth North): I have two minutes and I'd like to talk about two hospitals in Hamilton. St. Joseph's in Hamilton has no deficit and has not had a deficit for five years; in fact it had surpluses. If you go into that hospital, you see and hear none of the things that are going on that Mrs. Pupatello alluded to. I'm not saying they're not there, but not in St. Joseph's in Hamilton.

Next door there's another hospital in Hamilton. Scott Rowand of the so-called superhospital. The four Hamilton MPPs met with him at the end of May 1998. He told us he had a \$19-million deficit, but according to his budget it would be in surplus by the year 2000. We tried to help him out. Within two weeks we got \$500,000 for an MRI. A couple of weeks later, we gave him \$5.1 million and Ms. Ross here presented the cheque. What happened three months later? I read in the newspaper, as did Ms. Ross and the other Hamilton MPPs — no phone calls, nothing — that he's got a \$38-million deficit. Where did that come from? In three months he doubled his deficit. At that rate, by the year 2001 his deficit will be larger than the entire Ontario deficit this year. What is the reason?

Liberal government in Ottawa should take some responsibility for removing almost \$6 billion from health care. Gerard Kennedy is going to be schmoozing with the killer of health care, Allan Rock. There's no question, he's going to be dancing with him and the cinders will soon be at his feet.

I just want to know where the member for Windsor-Sandwich comes from. Where's her history? From my research, Madam Speaker, you'd be pleased to know that I have found out that Ms. Pupatello was a member of the Win-Win committee which recommended closing a hospital in Windsor and being up — by the way, I'm going to quote this. She was a member of the Win-Win committee which advocated closing a hospital in Windsor. That may be the most intelligent thing she said because what she said was that to reinforce the existence of other hospitals to —

Mrs. Pupatello: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: The member opposite cannot lie in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: You have to withdraw that, member for Windsor-Sandwich.

Mrs. Pupatello: I am not a member of the Win-Win. I was not on the hospital —

The Deputy Speaker: Please take your seat. Order. Member for Windsor-Sandwich, you must withdraw. You accused another member of lying.

Mrs. Pupatello: I withdraw the word "lie." Thanks, Speaker.

Mr. O'Toole: The reference I made — she knows full well her previous position. I just want members to know that motive is what we're about here. I question the legitimacy. Given the review from the Sudbury Star and given the review from the Ontario Hospital Association, I question your motives.

Mr. Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I'm delighted to join the debate, even though briefly, and congratulate my colleague the member for Windsor-Sandwich for bringing this resolution forward today. It is somewhat disheartening to hear some of the debate on such an important issue. I believe that when the Premier and the government side put out material like this, they really mean it. The fact is they cannot pull the wool over the people's eyes in Ontario here when it comes to health care because this really does not suffice to provide the quality of health care the Premier is saying in this very expensive brochure here.

I have to say that while they are perhaps not taking the issue seriously here, studying the case and how to improve it, patients are dying. Ontario people are dying. I wonder how members of the House, especially on the government side, will feel when they have to face a young widow due to the fact that at one particular hospital here in Metro-Toronto, for six hours they didn't know what to do with that particular patient because there was not enough staff, not enough doctors. They couldn't find one bed in all of Metro and the 39-year-old patient died on the way to Hamilton General Hospital. Why is that? At least, if we

You might say, "Oh, this is just Tory rhetoric." We discussed with him at that time: "You've got too much administration. You've eight vice-presidents at \$150,000 each." That's more than Stelco which has 10 times the budget. If you think this is just Tory rhetoric, look at today's Hamilton Speculator. A nurse writes there, saying: "The problem with the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp is they've got too much administration, too much management. They're getting raises of 12%."

Mr Skarica: Before any money should go —

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired. Further debate.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South): The howls we hear opposite are coming from members who individually — the member for Northumberland, the member for Scarborough East and the member for Durham East — have refused to stand up for health care in their communities and they're here making an apology for it.

Minister, let's review the facts. Sadly the member from Wentworth has joined the cacophony of apologists for this government, because these are the people who have abandoned patients in emergency room hallways. The member for Northumberland knows that in the city of Port Hope there is a hospital destined to close that the member for Northumberland refuses to stand up for. In Scarborough East —

Interjections.

Mr O'Toole: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. In this House the member for York South has put on the record that I don't support the Oshawa General Hospital or the Lakeridge Health Corporation. I want —

The Deputy Speaker: Take your seat. Stop the clock. Member for Durham East, take your seat. I will ask all members to come to order now.

Mr Kennedy: The public can gauge for themselves the thin veneer of desperation about these people, because they know that in Hamilton — and the member for Wentworth had the gall to stand up — his government has removed \$60 million.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr Kennedy: I can tell you it's not about a vice-president; it's about nurses, hundreds of nurses who aren't available to provide the care. The member from Scarborough had the gall to stand up, when people in Scarborough have waited for two and three days in emergency room hallways. The hospital there, Scarborough Grace, said to him —

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Take your seat, please. I'd ask the member for York South to direct his comments to the Chair, please.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Member for Durham East, I'm not warning you again.

Mr Kennedy: Madam Speaker, the salient facts are clear. I challenge each and every one of these bold members to a debate in their own community about the money that has been cut.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr Kennedy: I can tell you, just as their minister was too afraid to talk about Sudbury, just as their members in Ottawa were to afraid to talk about Ottawa, no one has taken up the challenge of the debate because this is the government that has fired nurses, this is the government that's closing the Port Hope hospital, this is the government that has taken nurses out of Scarborough. This is the element that has taken nurses out of Scarborough. This is the government today, as we stand in private members' business on the opposition side as well to come to order.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, I am not going to take any more from you today. If I hear you make one more comment, I will name you.

Member for York South, continue.

Mr Kennedy: The members of the public will understand that the train that all these members opposite are on is a train going to a certain place, and it's called two-tier, American-style health care. Their names will be inscribed on it if we ever get there.

What their shouting and the cacophony of the government side is trying to disguise are the facts. The facts are that when it comes to the actual money put into communities and taken out of communities, this is the sad roll of disgrace: \$50 million from Hamilton, \$28 million from Kingston, \$15 million from Kitchen-Waterloo, \$47 million from London, \$27 million from Sudbury, \$226 million from Toronto, \$20 million from Windsor-Essex — a sad, sad legacy that each of you deserves.

Mr Christopherson: I appreciate the opportunity to join in the debate. Yes, we will be supporting the resolution. Let me also extend a welcome to the citizens of Windsor who are here for this important debate. Windsor, of course, is very similar to Hamilton in terms of its history and its growth and the kind of community we are. I always feel very comfortable when I travel to Windsor; we're having a by-election in Nickel Belt. Our candidate, Blain Morton, has been on the doorstep listening to the citizens of that riding talk about their fears about what's happening to the health care system, in particular the hospitals in this province.

Government members are very good at reading out the prepared speeches that the boys in the backroom have made up for them, but the reality is that they don't want to talk about what's happening in communities. That's why it's so important that these citizens are here. I realize that the people watching on TV can't see that, but the gallery

is full of citizens who travelled all the way from Windsor hospital system, because the government won't listen. They won't deal with reality.

1150

My colleague from Wentworth North stands up and in typical Tory fashion opens his jacket, puts his hands on his hips, starts wagging a finger and saying, "The problem with the hospital system in Hamilton is the bureaucrats." Automatically, that's where they put the blame rather than listening to what's happening.

What is Scott Rowand saying? I'm talking about the head of the second-largest hospital in Canada. A headline last week in the Hamilton Spectator: "Hospitals Crippled by Huge Deficit: Patient Service Cuts Likely." He says, "For the first time in my career, I don't know how to fix this problem other than an awful lot of closures of programs and services needed by the community."

"We need more cash in the system and we need it now. And that is cash to deal with the issues that we are dealing with today. Don't ask us to do anything more because the people in the system are at their limit."

The member for Wentworth North stands up and says, "Where did this deficit come from?" First of all, it came from changes that this government made in the OHIP system which put more costs on our hospitals. Secondly, there was a settlement with the Ontario Nurses' Association. Tortes, of course, don't believe that public servants like teachers and nurses deserve a decent level of pay. But for those of us who do, that's a legitimate expense.

When I show up at that hospital with a family member or one of my constituents shows up at a hospital in Hamilton we want the best professional services we can receive. You get that by paying people decent wages and benefits and providing them with training. But that's not what you see. You see a cost. How dare an ordinary working person make a half-decent living. We've seen that in every piece of labour legislation, in every change in social services, and we certainly see it here when we're talking about hospitals.

Thirty-eight million dollars, and the president of this hospital in Hamilton is saying, "I either have to stop providing services to the citizens of Hamilton or run a huge deficit." And what's happening on the Tory side? These members run around the province, pounding their chests saying, "We cut taxes by 30%." Your wealthy friends may think that's great as they're taking home \$15,000, \$20,000, \$50,000 a year more because of that tax cut, but that Hamilton citizen who's worried about having the services they need in their hospital will be lucky if they got a cup of coffee out of that tax cut. Their property taxes are going through the roof, our schools are closing, and at the end of the day they're losing the valuable health system that we have in our community. That's not fair.

It's not fair to these citizens from Windsor. It's not fair to the citizens of my community of Hamilton. It's not fair to the people who are voting today in Nickel Belt. Your day of reckoning will come when you call a general elec-

tion and people like those here today can get at you in the only way that that matters: in the ballot box.

Mrs Martion Boyd (London Centre): We can all tell how passionately concerned about health care all of us are and certainly those who are visiting the Legislature today. My colleague from Hamilton Centre is quite right that the day of reckoning will come, but it will come for both Liberals and Conservatives. It is important for the people of Ontario to understand very clearly that the Liberal federal government has taken \$2.5 billion out of health care in the province of Ontario. There is nothing to choose between Liberals and Conservatives when it comes to the issue of health care. They make fine statements about reopening hospitals, they make fine statements about hiring nurses, they make fine statements about improving community care but they can't tell you how they're going to pay for it.

We can. We are very clear that in order for us to deal with the mess this government has made of health care, we have to reinvest dollars, and those dollars should come from the phony tax scheme that this government has put in place that takes \$5 billion to \$6 billion of revenue this province would have had and gives it primarily to those who are fortunate enough to earn high salaries. We are committed to removing the tax cut from the top 6% of earners, who get more than 25% of the return from that tax cut, and to reinvest those dollars in nurses, in hospitals and in setting standards.

We believe that we can set standards in this province, standards that governments must fund, that hospitals and community care agencies must meet, and that those are professional standards should be known to all of us. That's why we've put forward a health care accountability act which includes a patient bill of rights, which entitles every citizen of this province to know what the standards of care are, wherever they are cared for, and to be able to insist through proper processes, through a commissioner, that those standards be met.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Windsor-Sandwich has two minutes to respond.

Mrs Pupatello: To all of the people who came here from Windsor, I'm glad that you were here today to witness Conservative MPPs completely in denial, who choose to spend the time today saying that there is not a problem in health care. I apologize on their behalf.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Pointing out the fact that you want to close a hospital

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Scarborough East, come to order.

Mrs Pupatello: I'm sorry that you woke up so early to get here to witness this. I want to tell you that in Ontario 50% of the hospitals are in debt. I want to say that the Ontario Hospital Association wrote to me personally of their support. No one would believe that we would stand here today while I'm attacked personally instead of dealing with the issues.

There are people in Windsor who have experienced the gridlock in our emergency rooms. We know that there were operating problems with our hospitals, we knew that

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

Komos, Peter	Clearly, John C.
Kwinter, Monte	Colle, Mike
Lessard, Wayne	Conway, Sean G.
Martin, Tony	Cordiano, Joseph
Slipio, Tony	
William, Bud	
Wood, Len	
Ross, Lillian	Amott, Ted
Sampson, Rob	Baird, John R.
Sheehan, Frank	Boushy, Dave
Skarica, Tom	Carroll, Jack
Smith, Bruce	Chudleigh, Ted
Spina, Joseph	Danford, Harry
Sterling, Norman W.	DeFaria, Carl
Tilson, David	Doyle, Ed
Turnbull, David	Ecker, Janet
Vankoughnet, Bill	Ford, Douglas B.
Villeneuve, Noble	Fox, Gary
Witmer, Elizabeth	Froese, Tom
Wood, Bob	Galt, Doug
Young, Terence H.	Gilchrist, Steve
	Grimmett, Bill
	Hastings, John
	Hodgson, Chris
	Hudak, Tim
	Jordan, W. Leo
	Kells, Morley
	Maves, Bart
	Murro, Julia
	Mushinski, Marilyn
	Newman, Dan
	O'Toole, John
	Quellette, Jerry J.
	Parker, John L.
	Rollins, E.J. Douglas

Nays

The minister promised to come back to Windsor before the end of the summer to fix them. Instead, the parliamentary assistant to the health minister chose to talk about the fact that there are no problems in Ontario in health care. All I can say on behalf of all of the people from Windsor is that no one believes them. Nobody believes you. No one believes that there is not a problem in health care. Everyone understands that the hospitals are in deficit and debt. I remember giving Buzz Hargrove hell one day because he was calling for anarchy. All I have to say is that with this kind of attitude by Conservative MPPs, I think it's time for a revolution because that is the only thing that is going to change your mind and make you see that you will not get away with this kind of arrogance in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

**INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION
(THE HAGUE CONVENTION) ACT, 1998
LOI DE 1998
SUR L'ADOPTION INTERNATIONALE
(CONVENTION DE LA HAYE)**

The Deputy Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): We will deal first with ballot item number 21, standing in the name of Mr Cordiano.

Mr Cordiano has moved second reading of Bill 23. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried

Shall this bill be referred to the standing committee on social development? Is that agreed? I hear a no.

All those in favour of the question will please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed to the question will please rise and remain standing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): We will now deal with ballot item number 22, standing in the name of Mrs Pupateil.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye." All those opposed, please say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; a five-minute bell. The division bells rang from 1201 to 1206.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour will please stand and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce
Boyd, Marion	Cullen, Alex
Bradley, James J.	Duncan, Dwight
Caplan, David	Gerritsen, John
Castelli, Annamaria	Gravelle, Michael
Christopherson, David	Kennedy, Gerard
	McLeod, Lyn
	Michash, Frank
	Patten, Richard
	Phillips, Gerry
	Pupateil, Sandra
	Sergio, Mano

Ayes

It is a terrible, shameful situation and it can only be attributed to the funding cuts and the uncaring attitude of this government. When they got to Hamilton they found care, they found attention, they found doctors, they found nurses, but unfortunately the patient had died. It's most unfortunate that we cannot provide the necessary care. Even though it may prove to be futile, at least the care should be provided to each person.

It is very sad, but I have to mention a particular case care we expect, as we were accustomed to. We was calling for a review and more funding to provide the resolution by the member for Windsor-Sandwich, which morning to see the government side not supporting the longer is that the case today. It was very shameful this and getting the care they knew they were going to get. No nowdays. People used to be proud of going to a hospital the inconsistencies that exist in our health care system

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I want to get back to the inconstancies that exist in our health care system and getting the care they knew they were going to get. No longer is that the case today. It was very shameful this morning to see the government side not supporting the resolution by the member for Windsor-Sandwich, which was calling for a review and more funding to provide the care we expect, as we were accustomed to.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I want to get back to the inconstancies that exist in our health care system

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HEALTH CARE

The House recessed from 1209 to 1330.

House will reconvene this afternoon at 1:30.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now leave the chair. The

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

ayes are 29; the nays are 44.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosters): The

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): People in this place and across the province will be aware that today there's a by-election in Nickel Belt. The issues have been education, health care, community services and jobs. The focus on education has been telling. A program of misinformation has been blanketing the airwaves, demeaning and demonizing teachers.

Let's look at the question of secondary teachers in class 25 more minutes a day. Mary Anne Amadio from Sault Ste Marie says in the Sault Star, "In isolation the additional 25 minutes does not appear very significant. However, the reality of the proposal is very different. A high school teacher is not just being asked to tuck on an additional 25 minutes to his or her workday. He or she is being asked to take on an additional 25 students including additional time for preparation, marking and conferencing with students.

"Having teachers instruct the additional class within the current teaching day not only reduces teachers, but

teacher effectiveness.

"You would not ask an elementary school teacher to add on an additional 25 students to his or her current day."

We New Democrats agree with Mary Anne Amadio and we disagree with the current government and its program of attacking teachers and attacking education and the system. We believe that if they put more money into the system, if they left the teachers who were there to do the job they've been trained to do and if they stopped demeaning and beating up on teachers, we would have a better system. We New Democrats support that and we will win —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you. Member for Scarborough West.

MAHATMA GHANDI

Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West): Tomorrow,

October 2, is the 130th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, the pre-eminent leader of Indian nationalism and the prophet of non-violence in the 20th century.

Gandhi was born at Porbandar in western India. He grew up in a home steeped in values of the Hindu religion. His chief tenets are non-violence and the belief in the eternity of all things, non-violence to living beings, vegetarianism, and mutual tolerance for human diversity. These are the principles to which Gandhi held throughout his entire life. He became the catalyst of the major revolutions of this century, revolutions against colonialism, racism and violence.

A true Moses of Asia, Gandhi's non-violent approach to liberation inspired the popular imagination of his people, whom he led to independence as a sovereign nation in 1947. His gaunt and saintly figure, holding a staff and marching silently across the Indian subcontinent, will forever be his enduring icon, especially for people suffering oppression, of all religions and nationalities.

MEDICAL LABORATORIES

Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South): I rise today to talk about the health treasury perpetrated by this government with respect to private laboratory services. It will hopefully be time for this government to change its mind. Small private laboratories in this province are having to take the Ontario government to court on Monday. They have to go to court because of this government's insistence on taking money away from small lab companies and giving it to other parts of the industry.

What that action of the minister means is that there will be fewer laboratory services available, and 23,000 people in Ontario have signed petitions because the labs that they get services from, the doctors they get services through, understand that access to these services is going to be compromised. In particular, seniors and disabled people who get home visits are going to find themselves without services.

We note particularly how the government official responding in the court case said that the reason they had to do this is because hospitals have been cut back. "Since they're globally funded, they create changes in patient treatment, including early discharge and discontinuation of programs within hospitals." In other words, we have a government official saying that the reason small laboratory services — Dr Joseph Kurian is here on behalf of one of the labs — have been cut back and cut out and given this unfair treatment is because the Harris government itself has cut services in hospitals. It's a shame on this province and it certainly needs to be addressed.

YOUNG OFFENDER FACILITY

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): This Harris government, with its passion for privatization, is abandoning its responsibility for the operation and maintenance of jails and young offender facilities across this province, and most notably down in Pelham where this government has given a green light to the establishment of a privatized young offender secure custody facility in the midst of a very unique rural, residential neighbourhood and in a building that was never designed to be a secure custody building.

Let's make no mistake about it, these are not shoplifters, these are not first-time offenders. This location is going to be run by private operators and it's going to house some of the most dangerous and disturbed young people this province has. These are people who will have been found guilty of some of the most serious crimes in the

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): It is difficult to reach into the mailbox these days or to open the local newspaper or listen to the radio or watch television without being overwhelmed by the deluge of Harris government propaganda paid for by the beleaguered taxpayers of Ontario.

For a government which pinches pennies when it comes to education or hospital funding, the Ontario Conservatives are more than eager to spend wildly when it comes to promoting themselves with expensive pamphlets; full-page newspaper ads; catchy, if inaccurate, radio spots; and highly partisan and slanted self-congratulatory TV commercials.

Mike Harris and his band of so-called taxfighters must have smirks a mile wide on their faces as they search the editorial pages for even one critical piece by usually vigilant and rightfully suspicious editorial writers. As long as the watchdogs of the government scene, they will continue to waste millions of hard-earned tax dollars on patting themselves on the back.

The propaganda exercise being undertaken by Mike Harris and his regime is a disgrace, as it wastes money and gives yet another unfair advantage to a government which is already flush with funds from the rich and the powerful. The taxpayers of Ontario will remember this blatant waste of their tax dollars.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): The crisis in education which the former Minister of Education announced over a year ago is unfolding day by day. As we look across the province, we see hundreds of schools under the real threat of having to close because of this government's new funding formula. The Minister of Education tries to distance himself from that, but he knows, and people are beginning to understand more clearly, that in fact it's the new funding formula that is forcing school board after school board to have to look at closing schools; schools that are functioning, schools that are now providing good education, schools that are providing a useful service to each and every one of their communities.

In the city of Toronto we know that on the public board side they are going to be looking at some 100 to 170 schools. On the Catholic board side, 29 schools have already been identified. Meetings have taken place in some of those schools; schools like St Peter, which had a meeting last night, schools like R.W. Scott, St Raymond, St Rita, St Joseph; schools that are offering good, solid education and that are going to be put under the real threat of closing because of no other reason than the government thinks they have surplus space. Some of these schools might have a few empty classrooms, most of them in fact can nowhere meet the kind of guidelines and criteria that

The irony is that the government has already announced the closure of Arrell observation centre in Hamilton, which has a long record of accountability and effectiveness in maintaining security and effective treatment. We've got the Niagara Detention Centre, a 20-bed young offenders' facility that's been shut down for two years now, sitting empty. Yet this government is going to spend millions of dollars to impose a privately run and entirely inappropriate facility on a residential neighbourhood, at great risk to them and to the community and, quite frankly, at great risk to those young offenders who should be receiving effective treatment.

OKTOBERFEST

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): On October 9 the keg will tapped, kicking off the 1998 Oktoberfest festival in the Kitchener region and marking the 30th anniversary of Oktoberfest.

Thirty years ago, a small group of men and women from the Concordia Club decided they wanted to celebrate their German heritage. It has evolved into one of the most successful community celebrations in Canada.

The Oktoberfest festival is the largest Bavarian festival outside of Bavaria, the third-largest tourism event in Canada and the largest in Ontario. Today it has a staff of seven full-time and five part-time people, a board of directors of 35 elected members and an advisory council of 40 members. What is truly outstanding is the fact that 450 members work year-round on 22 committees. In addition, during the nine days of the festival, more than 800 volunteers will take part.

Oktoberfest operates from 18 accredited festhallen, which include five German clubs: the Schwaben, Concordia, Alpine, Transylvania and the German Hunting and Fishing Club, along with the 13 other festhallen operated by service clubs or private establishments.

In addition to being a successful festival, Oktoberfest has a significant impact on tourism not only in the Kitchener region but throughout Ontario and benefits over 70 different charities.

During the nine days of Oktoberfest, over 600,000 visitors will visit our region, providing a major economic impact to the tune of tens of millions of dollars.

The Thanksgiving Day Oktoberfest parade will be seen by over 300,000 people lining the streets, with an additional 1.2 million people seeing it televised throughout North America.

I congratulate the men and women who work so diligently to make Oktoberfest the tremendous success it is, and welcome all of you to join in the fun.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is that an official Oktoberfest jacket?

Mr Wettlaufer: It's a Bavarian jacket.

The Speaker: I see. It's very nice.

the ministry has set, but most of them are going to be under the real threat of closure.

I say to the school boards, have the courage to stand up to this government and say that you will not do their bidding, and work with parents to fight this new formula which will result in the closure of many schools.

COMPENSATION FOR HEPATITIS C PATIENTS

Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea): On May 4

this House voted unanimously to demand full compensation for all victims of hepatitis C, regardless of any arbitrary date set by the federal Liberal government.

I've been informed that the member for York South is hosting a fundraiser this evening and that his guest will be none other than the Liberal Minister of Health, Allan Rock, who opposes full compensation.

Our colleague did the right thing when he supported full compensation for all victims of hepatitis C. Will he

have the courage tonight, I wonder, to do the same thing when he sees Mr Rock? Dare we hope that this evening Mr Rock will experience a full and caring conversion? Dare we hope for justice tonight? Dare we hope that this evening the Liberal who cut billions out of Ontario's health care will repent?

This Harris government has put its money where its

mouth is by offering full compensation for all victims of hepatitis C, while the Liberals refuse to do the right thing. The Liberals talk about "care, not cash." So why do we focus on compensation? Because this is a debilitating disease. It prevents victims from holding a job, paying the mortgage or putting food on the table. Victims deserve but we all know it's just empty Liberal rhetoric.

I say to Mr Kennedy, tonight tell your federal Liberal cousin with whom you are so intimate that Ontarians want full compensation for all victims of hepatitis C, and I concur. The victims —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 SUR LE JOUR COMMÉMORATIF DE L'HOLOCAUSTE

Mr Chudleigh moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 66, An Act to proclaim Holocaust Memorial Day — Yom ha-Shoah in Ontario / Projet de loi 66, Loi proclamant le Jour commémoratif de l'Holocauste — Yom ha-Choah en Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Haldimand North): The purpose of this bill is to establish a Holocaust Memorial Day to

GERMAN PIONEERS DAY ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998 SUR LE JOUR DES PIONNIERS ALLEMANDS

commemorate the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and to focus attention on other instances of genocide that take place in our world every day.

Mr Wettlaufer moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 67, An Act to proclaim German Pioneers Day / Projet de loi 67, Loi proclamant le Jour des pionniers allemands.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): German immigrants began arriving in large numbers in Upper Canada, during the 18th century, along with other United Empire Loyalists, after the American Revolution. This bill will recognize the entrepreneurship and the industriousness of the German peoples who settled our area and did so much for Ontario.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that notwithstanding standing order 95(d), Mr Ramsay and Mr Kwitter exchange places in the order of precedence for private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDING OFFICERS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I seek unanimous consent to move without notice a motion regarding the appointment of presiding officers.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Agreed?

Hon Mr Sterling: I move that notwithstanding the order of the House dated October 9, 1997, Mr Johnson, member for the electoral district of Perth, be appointed Deputy Speaker and Chair of the committee of the whole House; that Mr Morin, member for the electoral district of Carleton East — they had Carleton; that happens to be the riding I represent —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Forshadowning. Hon Mr Sterling: — be appointed First Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House; and that Ms Churley, member for the electoral district of Riverdale, be appointed Second Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

OF OLDER PERSONS INTERNATIONAL YEAR

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Long-Term Care, minister responsible for seniors): Today is the International Day of Older Persons, and in every province across Canada and around the world this is a day when people are launching the International Year of Older Persons. On behalf of all members of this Legislature, it is my privilege to officially launch Ontario's activities for this important year.

As we prepare to celebrate the new millennium, it is only fitting that we honour the people who brought us safely through the 20th century: Ontario's seniors. Over the years our province's elders helped build our communities we live in and they continue to contribute to their strength, their diversity and their well-being.

Our vision is of a province where all seniors, now and in the future, continue to contribute to society, to age with dignity, to remain independent as long as possible and are respected for their achievements. Our government has taken great strides over the last three years towards this vision.

By listening carefully to Ontario's seniors we have taken significant steps towards addressing their health, safety and security needs. Acting upon what we have heard, the Premier has asked all ministries in our government to work together to plan for the needs of our aging society.

Further towards our vision for Ontario's seniors, I am presenting the first in a series of announcements to support and commemorate the International Year of Older Persons by introducing the community partnership projects program and the provincial legacy program for our citizens.

Several weeks ago I wrote to all members of this Parliament, encouraging them to establish international year committees in each of their constituencies. It is my honour to announce today that \$2.6 million has been set aside for these community-based grassroots commemorations so that Ontario can celebrate the international year for its seniors. Through each and every MPP's individual committee in this province, and using guidelines and criteria that are being provided to all members, local projects with a lasting legacy will receive funding during 1999. This community partnership program represents a \$20,000 investment that will be made available to community groups in each of Ontario's 130 constituencies.

We are also working on a provincial legacy program. The many elements of this program will include an enhanced seniors achievement award for our province; a series of projects that bring school-age children, veterans and seniors together to share their wisdom and their energy; opportunities for seniors to tell us what their

Much has been accomplished and more can be done to ensure that our elders feel a sense of their connection to their families, their friends, their community and their government. We need to remember the values our parents have shared with us through their lives. Seniors continue to make outstanding contributions to our province as parents, as grandparents, as caregivers and volunteers. Seniors frequently comment on the need for services close to where they have lived their lives: in their neighbourhood, in their community, near their family and their friends. We all put down our roots and grow and develop in our communities and want to live our lives in the places we call our homes. We are building a continuing care system that can ease the pain of loneliness, give comfort, dignity and, yes, it should even include a little hand-holding.

This government cares deeply about the needs of our elders, and we continue to care through our ongoing work. Our government is committed to realizing our vision and honours the promise we made to our parents that they can live in Ontario with comfort and with dignity. Together all members can renew this commitment in anticipation of 1999, but also, and more important, for all our future.

Ontario is taking a leadership role in Canada with our international year activity programs. We are reminding our nation that, as it prepares to celebrate a millennium, we in Ontario wish to celebrate the lives of the seniors who carefully and safely delivered us to the end of the 20th century. This theme, like our vision, is: Ontario, a province for all ages.

It was my privilege today to join the Honourable Lincoln Alexander, Ontario's honorary commissioner for the International Year of Older Persons, and Lois Neely, Ontario's representative to the Canada Coordinating Committee for the International Year of Older Persons. We planted an oak tree here at Queen's Park. In many ways an oak tree is symbolic of life in our province. Starting out as young people, we look for shelter, for nourishment, guidance, love and compassion from our elders. Later in life we grow taller and stronger and begin to raise our next generation. Still later in life our elders are a source of wisdom and guidance for the generations that follow.

Ontario has strong and vibrant community organizations today.

Ontario has strong and vibrant community organizations that help people every day. These groups, many of which are represented here today in the House, are actively planning activities to mark the international year. One timely example is the Ontario Community Support Association, which has designated October as Community Support Month. During this month I encourage all members of this House to celebrate and recognize the more than 12,000 professional staff and 45,000 volunteers who provide community support in our province every day to over 600,000 Ontarians.

I encourage all members of this Legislature to join me in actively supporting and celebrating the contributions of Ontario's 1.5 million seniors during our International Year of Older Persons.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): As the Liberal advocate for seniors' issues, it gives me great pleasure to rise on behalf of my leader, Dalton McGuinty, and my colleagues in the Ontario Liberal caucus to mark International Day of Older Persons.

It's indeed fitting that we honour our parents and grandparents in this way for many reasons, not the least of which is to thank them for building a society we now find ourselves battling to preserve in so many ways.

As legislators, sons and daughters, citizens, it does us well to pause for a moment to consider the immeasurable value that has been brought and continues to be brought to our lives. They play a critical role in our communities and continue to contribute endless volunteer hours to a variety of causes.

It is also incumbent upon us to consider the increasing number of older people who are victims of neglect, abandonment and abuse and to think ahead to a future where more of us will be living longer in our senior years.

How can we build a society which cares for its elderly, most vulnerable citizens, a society which values their dignity? We look forward to 1999, the UN-declared International Year of Older Persons, and take seriously our responsibility to create "A Society for All Ages," that year's theme and objective.

Each and every one of us, and especially members of government, must take our obligation to create that kind of society seriously. To do that, we need to address the fact that here at home seniors are finding it increasingly difficult to get by on limited incomes, access the health care they need and maintain their independence. They are increasingly among our poorest citizens.

The minister has said that the Harris government has listened to the seniors and is providing for their health, safety and security needs. The unfortunate reality is that seniors in Ontario are finding themselves paying the price for some of the current government's policies in the form of user fees for drugs, longer waiting lists for long-term care and increased delays in accessing health care.

As we well know, the measure of a good society is the way in which it cares for its most helpless and needy, and the measure of a good government is the contribution it makes towards achieving that ultimate goal. It can't all happen here or in the seats of government around the world. This spirit must reach every citizen. We must alter attitudes so as to view our elderly citizens as a blessing and not a burden. We have so much more to learn in that regard.

Once again, I join my colleague the minister responsible for seniors in honouring older persons, both here at home and around the world. We look forward to making the goal of the International Year of Older Persons a reality by fostering harmony, mutual respect and mutual support across all generations, a true society for all ages.

1400

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): What we'll

have to ensure for seniors in our society in particular is the kind of hospital care that they are going to need from time to time.

When Dr David Foot, the author of the famous book *Boom, Bust and Echo*, came to Brock University in St Catharines, a student in the audience asked him, "If you could give any advice to the Mike Harris government in Ontario, what would it be?" His answer was, "Don't close hospitals." The hospitals in the area are unfortunately under the threat of the axe from the Conservative government of Mike Harris, despite the fact that during the last election campaign Mr Harris promised, "Robert, I can guarantee you I have no plans to close hospitals." Despite that, we have 35 hospitals in this province that have either been closed or been forced to merge with other hospitals. In the Niagara region, the hospital closing commission appointed by Mike Harris is doing a study at the present time and will be presenting its report. Seniors in our part of the province — and we have the largest number of seniors per capita of any community in Ontario — are looking forward to having all the hospitals stay open and all the services that are needed in place for them.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I too am pleased, on behalf of New Democrats in the province, to rise and join in the celebration of the beginning of the International Year of Older Persons.

Those of us who have been part of the work and the celebrations that have happened for other international years know that they act as an impetus for change; for change in attitudes, for change in programs, for change in the political sphere, for change in policy. Certainly, when I think of the International Year of Women, we know that was at the very time when women were beginning to seek equity within our society and the International Year of Older Persons gave real impetus to that effort and made a great difference in terms of uniting women around the world on their own behalf.

Similarly, the International Year of the Family drew our attention to the kinds of supports that families need within their communities in order to continue to be the stable building blocks of our society. It also helped us to recognize the different kinds of families that we have in our society, the different relationships that those families have with their communities, with one another and with society as a whole.

Now we are on the eve of the International Year of Older Persons, and of course all of us, as we grow older, understand that our elders could give. We didn't always understand that when we were younger. In my generation the saying used to be, "Never trust anybody over 30." Well, as we passed 30 we learned and needed to learn that creativity of those who were older and that we needed to honour the institutions they had founded, we needed to respect the kinds of services they had developed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Health. A study that was made public this morning says that the rich and the well-connected are getting faster heart care in Ontario. This confirms what many people have suspected all along. Your cuts and your approach to health care in our province are creating a two-tier health care system. If you've got money and you know the right people, you get better health care.

My question for you, Minister, is very straightforward: How does it feel knowing that you have created two-tier health care in Ontario and what do you have to say to those who aren't wealthy and don't have the right connections?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): What I would say is that jumping the queue at any time is totally unacceptable to this government. I believe treatment decisions must always be made based on medical need. That's why we have continued to support the development of the CCN, which was established by the New Democratic Party and has been universally hailed as being a good, innovative committee. They do have waiting lists, and we encourage them to move forward and do whatever else they can in order to ensure that people do not get treatment who are not in the most need.

Mr McGuinty: Those are fine words, Minister, but do you know why people are doing whatever they can to jump the queue? Because you have laid down the conditions in Ontario health care which breed a sense of desperation. You've taken \$800 million out of our hospitals, you're closing 35 hospitals, you've laid off thousands of nurses. The number one issue today in Ontario is health care. You are breeding conditions of desperation. It's no wonder people are jumping the queue.

My question again is very simple: Why don't you simply admit that you're bankrupting our hospitals and you're creating two-tier health care? Your conditions are laying that down.

Hon Mrs Witmer: The reality is that we have put approximately \$65 million into cardiac care. I am very proud to say that because of our initiatives, we have seen a drop in waiting days from 78 days to 42 because of our improved funding for non-urgent cardiac care.

1410

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Final supplementary, member for Windsor-Sandwich.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): Minister, you're probably aware of why the people are here from Windsor, why two buses left Windsor at 5 o'clock this morning. They needed to hear you make the announcement that you promised by the end of this summer. In the meantime, in July and August alone in Windsor and Essex county, ambulances were not able to discharge their patients into emergency rooms 230 times in our

While we're celebrating, we need to understand the situation for those seniors who are fortunate enough, privileged enough, to have a good income, to have a stable place to live, to have family supports around them when they need those supports as they grow frail, to have the kind of dollars they need to purchase the services that they now have to purchase that are not available to them under medicare.

We must remember that there are many seniors who do not have those privileges and that part of what we are doing in the International Year of Older Persons is examining ourselves and our policies federally and provincially and indeed municipally to ensure that we have an approach to the needs of our senior citizens that is going to enable more and more of them, ideally all of them, to enjoy the quality of life they ought to enjoy.

We know that's not the case at this point in time. We know that seniors across this province are deeply disappointed in the erosion of the services that they themselves built through their votes for progressive governments in the past, that they built through their taxes, and they are Governments know to their peril that senior citizens are very knowledgeable voters and that they take their democratic duty very seriously. It is not a surprise that first the Conservative federal government and now the Liberal federal government have backed off plans to reduce the incomes of seniors. It is not a surprise at all.

We should expect that the voices raised against the kinds of policies that erode health services, that erode educational opportunities, that erode our communities and the services available to seniors within our communities, that erode our ability to offer a multicultural approach to those who live within our community — we must expect that to become part of a political picture, and we must remember that seniors have the knowledge, the commitment, the dedication and the time to call us to account for our responsibility as legislators. I expect that will be a major part of Ontario's celebration of the International Year of Older Persons.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We know that the Premier and the Minister of Education were making a very important announcement outside the House today dealing with education changes. We've been told that the Minister of Education will be due back here at about 2:15. I don't know if the minister was intending to make a statement in the House, but I would like to move for unanimous consent that at 2:15, or when the Minister of Education arrives, we revert back to ministers' statements to have the Minister of Education make a statement on the announcement that he made today at 1:30.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Agreed? No.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Just while I have a moment, I would like to introduce all those members in the public gallery who came from Windsor early this morning. We

The Speaker: No, that's not a point of order.

welcome them to Queen's Park.

advised them that senior government lawyers are taking a look at this case and reviewing the judge's decision as quickly as possible to determine if there are any grounds for appeal.

As you are aware, we are committed to reducing backlog all over the province, particularly in Brampton. I'm pleased to inform the member that we have made significant progress in doing that. We've reduced the number of cases pending by about 36%. We've reduced the number of months to trial from 11 months in November 1996 to four months as of now. Unfortunately, there are still cases that aren't being reached and we are doing everything we can to ensure that the backlog is being reduced here and all over the province.

Mr Phillips: Minister, the Rodrigues family is here in the gallery. I'm sending over to you a petition with 2,300 names on it. One of the pages might take it over. I want you to focus on this specific case. They are desperately afraid that they will simply hear more rhetoric from their officials, from their government. I quote from Mrs Rodrigues's letter to you. She said: "You have not gone through a two-year period attending 34 court appearances in Brampton. You have not pleaded on every occasion with the crown attorneys to make certain these charges would not be stayed." They are desperately afraid that all they're going to hear from their government, from their officials, is: "We're sorry, but this individual is gone. There will be no trial." That would be a travesty. You can understand, I think, their rage. I might add, with all due respect, that your answer about other things you're doing is of little comfort to this family. I repeat, what are you going to do to ensure that in this case, the tragic Rodrigues case, justice is served?

Hon Mr Harnick: As I indicated, this case is being reviewed by the assistant deputy minister responsible for criminal law, who met with the Rodrigues family to review all the issues with them and to try and address the very question you have asked me. If there are grounds to appeal that decision, and certainly that's the issue that those lawyers are now dealing with, the appeal will be launched. I can assure you that the decision of the judge and the transcripts are being reviewed by a number of people. I hope we are able to provide the answer to the Rodrigues family so they can be assured that everything that can be done is being done. That's what we want to do. I appreciate your concern and I'm happy to work with you to ensure that the Rodrigues family understands the situation.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): I have a question for the Minister of Health. The minister must be aware of the articles in today's Toronto Star and in the Globe and Mail that point out that in Mike Harris's health care system, if you're wealthy and well-connected you get to go to the front of the line while the rest of us wait. The particular study is about cardiac care.

hospitals because there was no room. You promised by the end of the summer you would come out with an announcement that would improve the operating funds for our hospitals. These people are here. They've been here this morning, fighting with this government that refuses to understand that there are major problems with your health restructuring system.

The Ontario Hospital Association tells us that 50% of the Windsor Hotel-Dieu Grace \$5 million this year. Minister, today the people are here in this House waiting for you to make an announcement that addresses the hospital operating dollars for Windsor and Essex county.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I am very pleased to say that we will be announcing this month the additional money that is going to be provided for the people in Windsor and throughout Ontario. Also, we have made available to the Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital the fact that we will be providing them with a grant of up to \$44,368,000.

The Speaker: New question, leader of the official opposition. **Mr McGuinty:** My second question is for the Minister of Education, who I understand will be here shortly, so I'll stand it down.

The Speaker: New question, leader of the third party. **Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My questions are also for the Minister of Education.

The Speaker: Stand them down, both of them? Okay, we'll go back to the third question for the official opposition.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Attorney General. I want to find out how you plan to make certain that justice is served for a family that lives in my constituency.

You will be aware that on June 23, 1996, a woman named Claudine Rodrigues, 23 years old, was killed when the car she was in was hit. The driver of the other car was charged with impaired driving causing death, blood alcohol over 80 and possession of marijuana. I understand this was the third impaired driving charge laid against the individual over a considerable period of time.

The family then went through the unbearable experience of 34 different days that they spent in court, awaiting the trial of this individual. Tragically, on September 9, 1998, the judge threw the case out, simply dismissed it without any trial, citing "22 months, one week and one day of institutional delay."

My question is this, Minister: What are you going to do to ensure that this family sees proper justice delivered in this tragic case?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member for his question. The death of Claudine Rodrigues is a tragedy, and certainly our deepest sympathies go out to her family and friends. We have met with her family and have

I want to ask about cancer care. Specifically, are you aware of the waiting list now for cancer care in Ontario? Two thirds of the patients waiting for radiation treatment do not get their treatment within the recommended waiting time. Even you should be able to imagine the fear and anxiety this creates for the 45,000 people who will be diagnosed with cancer in Ontario this year. My question is, what are you going to do about it? Create another line for the rich and powerful and let the rest of us wait?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): We will do what we have continued to do. When we were elected in 1995 we found that the excellence of the health system in this province was threatened because of the lack of planning by previous governments. A good case in point is the fact that until we announced our 20,000 new beds in long-term care, there had not been a bed awarded for over 10 years. That was the type of lack of planning that we were seeing in this province.

So what did we do for cancer patients? We created Cancer Care Ontario in order that they could look at the coordination and the management of cancer services to ensure that patients are going to get the services they need. We invested \$24 million into cancer screening programs for women, and we know that as a result, women between the ages of 50 and 69 are going to suffer fewer deaths than had been encountered before. We have also added \$16.5 million to Cancer Care Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer.
Hon Mrs Witmer: We've invested \$8.1 million into children's services, and the list goes on and on.

We are doing more —
The Speaker: Supplementarity.
Mr Hampton: The minister says she is going to continue to do what she's doing. I presume that means you're going to continue to create a two-tier health care system in Ontario, one for the wealthy and another for the rest of us. Minister, your answer is completely phony. You didn't create Cancer Care Ontario. The people who are part of Cancer Care Ontario were brought together by Ruth Grier, Minister of Health in the previous government. You haven't given Cancer Care Ontario the \$16 million they need. They still don't even know what their budget is this year. Six months into the year, you can't tell them what their budget is. For example, in Sudbury the waiting list continues to grow. There are currently 3,000 active cancer patients in Sudbury, and that number is growing by 4% a year. Minister, when Cancer Care Ontario doesn't even know what their budget is for this year and they're half-way through the year, when the lists are growing day by day, it's time for you to act. What are you going to do? You've got money for your income tax scheme. Where's the money for health care and for cancer patients? I'm very proud of what we've done

Hon Mrs Witmer: I'm very proud of what we've done taking services to where people need them. Our government recently announced two new cancer care treatment

SCHOOL CLOSURES

The Speaker: We're going to go to the second leader's question for the official opposition.

We have a three-year pilot project in Thunder Bay that takes a look at cervical cancer. We have targeted \$700,000 to women who are currently not screened for cervical cancer. We are moving forward on every front, whether it's breast cancer, cervical cancer, pediatric cancer. In each and every way we are expanding the services, expanding the facilities, and we are bringing the services closer to home.

The Speaker: We're going to go to the second leader's question for the official opposition.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Education. Yesterday we told you of some of the devastating effects that your funding formula is going to have on schools right across the province.

Mike Harris told us he wasn't going to cut classroom spending, but now we find that in fact he's shutting down entire schools. Your formula is going to force more than 600 schools to shut down before the next school year. I can't believe that you truly understand the disruption you are about to create in the lives of thousands of students, their parents, their families and the community. If you did understand that, you couldn't possibly proceed with this kind of proposal.

In the Toronto District School Board alone, you're going to close 180 schools. Those aren't empty schools; those schools aren't falling apart. They're being forced to close because of your formula.

Tell me, Minister, why are you so intent on closing so many schools here in Toronto and right across the province and causing so much more disruption in the lives of students and their parents?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): As I've indicated before, the province of Ontario is not closing any schools, not closing one school. The province of Ontario gives money to the school boards, an adequate supply of money to the school boards, as they have down through the years, as when school boards closed 136 schools across Ontario, they did when the Liberals were in power from 1985-90 research on this matter. They pull numbers out of thin air. I don't think we can necessarily rely on the Liberal make these decisions.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer.
Hon David Johnson: — whereas the day before, and this was in May, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board said, "We will not close any schools in" —

There is an obligation on behalf of the people of Ontario for the opposition parties to get their facts right at least once in a while. I plead with the opposition party, try to get your facts right.

The school boards are given adequate money. They will make decisions —

The Speaker: Thank you. New question. We go back to two leaders' question for the third party. We have a point of order.

Mrs. Lynn McLeod (Fort William): For the purpose of accuracy and public information, I would seek unanimous consent to ask the Minister of Education to present his estimates of how many schools may close as a result of the funding formula.

The Speaker: Agreed? No.

New question, third party.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Rainy River): I have a question for the Minister of Education. Despite what you say, it's becoming clear to people across Ontario that hundreds of schools are going to close in this province over the next year and a lot of those schools are going to be in small rural communities. What's really bizarre is that last month the Premier went out into rural Ontario and announced a \$35-million grant program to keep young people living in rural communities. Has it occurred to your government that if you start closing small rural schools the next thing that will close will be the very rural communities that those schools are in?

Hon. David Johnson: Again I will say that this province is not closing any schools across Ontario. Urban school boards and rural school boards are making these decisions, as they have over the years, as they did when the NDP was in government and school boards decided to close over 100 schools — over 100 schools during the term of the NDP. School boards are making the same decisions today.

This government has doubled the funding for small schools from last year and the funding for remote rural schools, recognizing that in remote areas, in rural areas, it's more difficult to achieve the same size of classes, the same size of school. There is more support for rural communities in that regard. With that extra support, those school boards, in conjunction with their parents, are making the right decisions in terms of accommodation.

Mr. Hampton: This is incredible. This is the minister who has seized total control over education, who sets education budgets behind closed doors and now, when schools start to close because he has taken \$1 billion out of the system, he says the bogeyman did it. Minister, it's not going to wash.

All across Ontario, students and their parents are saying they're not going to stand for this. In Dorchester, Ontario, 15-year-old Ashley Murray has said there's no way she'll bus into London. In St. Mary's, Ontario, Julie Phillips writes and says there is no way they will send their child by bus into an urban school after making the decision to locate in a rural area.

Minister, it's not too late. Will you admit you've made a mistake? Will you change the funding formula so these

The Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. McGuinty: It's very interesting that when it comes to school openings, this minister is there, shovel in hand, on time for the photo op, but he's shovelling something entirely different when it comes to school closures.

Minister, I have a very simple, straight and direct question for you. If you're prepared to attend for photo ops to school openings, I'm wondering, are you prepared to attend for photo ops of school closures in Ontario?

Hon. David Johnson: If we're looking at the Liberal research, it must be an embarrassment —

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. David Johnson: The Liberal Party said that 10,000 teachers would be laid off. Wrong. Boards are hiring new teachers. The Liberals said there would be 10,000 fewer teachers. Wrong again. At the elementary level in particular, there will be more teachers in the system.

This is a serious issue. The leader of the official opposition has raised the Toronto issue. There are some 80 schools in the Toronto board which are no longer being used for public purposes. Some are empty, some are used for storage, some are rented for other uses. On behalf of the taxpayers, maybe the Toronto board would come to the conclusion that for those schools which they don't need any more, rather than wasting the money on heat and light etc — and that's up to the Toronto board — maybe they should dispose of those schools and use the money for the classroom. But that's a decision the Toronto board will make, and the other boards across Ontario, in conjunction with their parents.

Mr. McGuinty: Using your funding formula, using your numbers, 600 schools in this province are going to be closed. You're going to cause disruption in the lives of thousands and thousands of students, in the lives of their parents, in the lives of their families, in the lives of their communities.

Schools are much more, as you well know, than bricks and mortar. In many ways they are a part of the very heart and soul of a community. You're about to shut them down. You are very eager to be there when you give away a bit of money to open up a school. My question again is, are you going to attend the closure of any of those 600 schools in Ontario for purposes of a photo op?

1430

Hon. David Johnson: Again I would say, "Nonsense," to the mathematics of the Liberals. The Liberals indicated that there would be a billion dollars cut from education in the province of Ontario. Wrong again. In fact there are more dollars in the classroom. Yes, there are less dollars for administration, but more dollars in the classroom and more dollars in education in totality.

Earlier this week, in this very House, the critic for the Liberal Party indicated that special education funding was not flowing. Wrong again. In the Lakehead board, her own board, over half a million dollars has flowed for special education purposes.

schools don't have to close? Will you do that before you create even more chaos in our schools?

Hon David Johnson: I applaud parents and students

who are involved in their communities dealing with their school boards. I think that's absolutely the right way to

go. As a matter of fact, this government has indicated to the school boards that if they are intent on looking at the

closure of schools, they must consult with the parents and the community and the students in that particular jurisdiction to ensure they come up with the best possible plan,

because it may be that in those communities where school boards feel they should close the school, there's another

solution such as the public and the separate school working together or the school working in conjunction with

other community activities, other community support groups, and they can share space. Maybe there are different kinds of solutions. I can tell you that some school

boards are more efficient in terms of the delivery of their services and they're more frugal, and as a result, they can

accommodate a greater variety of space. These are the kinds of processes that should be involved with the parents

and with the community.

Mr Hampton: This minister has the gall to talk about consultation. Most school boards used to have resolutions

on the books that required them to consult with the community for a year or two years as to whether schools

should be closed. You have passed rules which now require that to be done in three months, and they're your

rules, not the rules of school boards. They're your rules. You are going to force the decision within three months.

You are going to force that chaos, not the school boards. Will you extend your school closure deadline beyond

December 31 so that parents and students can learn about what is really happening here and what the options are? If

you don't extend it, you are the one who is going to force this chaos on our schools, on our families and on our

children. You extend the deadline.

Hon David Johnson: This government is not closing any schools. This government is not imposing any deadlines. There is no deadline. School boards are not under

any deadline. It's up to school boards. We have indicated that there is no requirement for school boards to report by

the end of this year. If school boards wish to have their inventory adjusted, then we are asking them to report by

the end of the year, but there's no requirement for school boards to meet any deadline, no requirement at all.

Boards are going through a legitimate process with their students, with their parents, with their community —

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): You said no funds if it was not done by the end of the year.

Mrs Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): How can you say that? You sent out a deadline for those boards.

The Speaker: Members for Beaches-Woodbine and Hamilton Centre, please come to order.

Hon David Johnson: Boards are going through a legitimate process with their students, with their parents, with their communities, with their students, as they have done in past years, coming to conclusions. For the opposition parties to

make politics out of this, to grasp numbers out of the air to try to gain some sort of political benefit I think is wrong. Let the communities resolve their problems and resolve the issues and come forward with reasonable solutions.

The Speaker: New question, leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: Again to the Minister of Education: It's your deadline for school closure and you're the one who's saying that if they don't make their decisions by December 31, they don't get the grant money. That's what's

going on.

1440

ACADEMIC TESTING

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My second question is simply this: Today you made an educational

announcement; it's a political testing announcement. You've announced that all grade sixers are now going to

have to go through mandatory testing. This is completely a politically motivated announcement. The arm's-length

Education Quality and Accountability Office doesn't recommend mandatory testing of grade sixers and at no

time have they recommended that. This is motivated strictly by politics.

Where is the evidence that universal testing of grade 6 students is going to improve curriculum development,

going to improve teaching strategies or going to improve student achievement any more than random testing? Why

are you creating yet more chaos in our schools? Haven't you created enough chaos already?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): I find it interesting that the leader of the third

party says that the Education Quality and Accountability Office doesn't support this. At the announcement just an

hour and a half ago, the head of the EQAO was there proudly indicating the fact that the new grade 6 testing

would be done across the province of Ontario as very much an integral part of the announcement and very much

recommending in favour of grade 6 being tested. So I would say to the leader, wrong again.

If the leader of the third party wants to know why we're doing testing, ask the parents of the province, ask

the people of the province. This testing will benefit the system, this testing will benefit the school, this testing will

benefit the school boards and, above and beyond all, this testing will benefit the students of the province of Ontario.

Mr Hampton: At no time has the Education Quality and Accountability Office recommended mandatory testing of grade 6 students. They have advocated — and you

know this — that random testing of grade 6 students gives them the information they need for the purposes of evaluating curriculum and evaluating teaching strategies.

This is going to cost, as we understand it, another \$3 million. Isn't it enough that you've spent \$2.5 million

already in September on your propaganda advertising? Isn't it enough that you've taken that amount of money out

of our schools strictly for propaganda? Where's the money going to come from? Which classroom is the money going

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr Harry Dandford (Hastings-Peterborough): My question is to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services and it concerns Ontario's approach to effective public safety. On Tuesday of this week, the Alberta Court of Appeal rejected a constitutional challenge by Ontario and five other provincial and territorial governments to the proposed universal gun registry.

Minister, I have spoken with a number of individuals, and indeed organizations, across this province who support Ontario's decision to participate in the challenge to the registration provisions of Bill C-68. They are concerned that Bill C-68 will divert policing resources away from the front lines where they are most needed. Will the minister explain to the House Ontario's position and reaction to the court decision on C-68?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): I thank the member for Hastings-Peterborough for the question. As I said on the day of the court's decision, I was disappointed but not disheartened. The nature of the decision indicated that the case we put before the courts had significant merit, as indicated by the views of at least two of the justices. I have indicated my encouragement to the province of Alberta with respect to launching an appeal of the decision. I hope that happens and I hope that the Supreme Court of Canada deals with it quickly.

The facts are that the federal government up to this point in time has spent —

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): This is shameful, Bob, and you know it. How come the police don't support you?

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order, member for Hamilton Centre.

Interruptions.

The Speaker: Order, Minister?

Hon Mr Runciman: The reality is the Liberal government in Ottawa has spent up to this point in time \$134 million and not registered one single gun. This government believes in real gun control, effective gun control, but this has no relationship whatsoever to gun control.

This is not going to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. Criminals do not register their guns, and this government will continue to oppose gun registration.

1450

Mr Dandford: I thank the Solicitor General for clarifying for the House that this federal legislation will not keep guns out of criminals' hands. Clearly the Ontario government, along with the support of other jurisdictions across this country, recognizes that registering firearms will not improve public safety.

You mentioned in your answer that the federal government has already spent an astounding \$134 million, with not a single gun actually being registered. Can the minister please outline his ministry's public safety spending priorities and how the federal money could have been better directed to promoting public safety?

to come from? Which schools are going to have to be closed to pay for your politically motivated grade 6 testing program?

Hon David Johnson: I assure all the members of the House that the money to pay for the testing does not come out of the funding formula. The province-wide testing is part of a quality program. This government is committed to improving the quality in the classrooms of the province.

The testing is part of that program, the new report card is part of that program, the new curriculum is part of that program, the purchase of the new textbooks across the province is part of that, teachers spending more time in the classroom is part of that program, the caps on the average size of classes is part of that quality program.

Now, for some reason the NDP and Liberals are opposed; they have opposed each and every one of those quality enhancements to education in the province of Ontario. I don't know why. But I can tell you that this government stands four-square behind improving the quality of education in the province.

Mr Hampton: Once again you're completely wrong.

No one opposes a thoughtful testing and assessment program that is recommended by people who are knowledgeable about it. What we are opposed to is politically motivated strategies that create chaos in our schools. Haven't you intruded enough in our children's lives? You've taken a billion dollars out of the system. You've completely demoralized teachers. You're shutting down schools. Schools are losing their extracurricular activities. And now, after the school year has already started, you come out and announce this politically motivated testing program, a testing program that is going to take another \$3 million out of classrooms for teaching, in order to support your politically motivated strategy.

Minister, will you stop creating chaos in our schools, stop intruding in our children's lives? Will you put the money back into the classroom, where our children need it? Think about kids. Think about their learning. You can't add to learning by merely testing and testing over again. Put the money back into teaching.

Hon David Johnson: The leader of the third party says we are taking money out of the classroom. Wrong. There is more money going into the classroom. The leader of the third party says \$1 billion has been taken out of the system. Wrong again. There is more money going into the education system in the province of Ontario.

Only the leader of the third party could call politicians the leader of reading, writing and arithmetic for grade 6 kids. Reading, writing and arithmetic — that's what the testing is. Somehow that involves politics. Only the leader of the third party could come to that conclusion.

This is good for the kids, this is good for the system. I can tell you that not only are we proud to have province-wide testing at the grade 3 and now at the grade 6 level, but it's my intent to broaden the testing and to include future grades in future years.

Hon Mr Runciman: I'd be pleased to do that. This

government has launched a \$150-million program which will see 1,000 new police officers on the front lines in Ontario in the next five years. The federal government has

already spent \$134 million on this costly program, which will not have an impact in terms of public safety. We are

hearing estimates of \$500 million to \$1 billion. If we just

took the \$134 million to enhance the Ontario program, that would mean an additional 500 police officers out on

the streets in Ontario. That's enough to police communities like Windsor, London, Oshawa.

If the federal Liberal government was really committed to doing something about public safety, they would invest

in front-line policing, they would crack down on gun smuggling and, perhaps most importantly, they'd do

something meaningful about the Young Offenders Act.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): My question is

to the Minister of Health. It was confirmed publicly last

week that up to 10% of the prisoners at the Thunder Bay

district jail are in need of psychiatric care rather than

incarceration. This is an astonishing number, one which

unfortunately reflects the reality of the decaying mental

health care services in our province.

You must be aware that the legal system is trapped into

incarcerating mentally ill offenders because of the lack of

beds and the services to care for them properly. Surely,

you must find this situation grossly unacceptable, and I

trust you recognize that the cutbacks to the system,

chronic underfunding and your closure of psychiatric beds

in Thunder Bay and across Ontario are what is causing

this unjust and disgraceful situation.

Minister, will you today acknowledge this serious

problem, finally, and tell Ontarians what immediate action

you're prepared to take to correct it?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): I ap-

preciate the question because, as you know, we have

indicated mental health is a priority for our government.

Several months ago I asked my parliamentary assistant

Dan Newman to do a review of the mental health strategy

in the province. He consulted with the stakeholders. We

consulted with our provincial advisory committee on

mental health. As a result of the consultation that was

done by Mr Newman, recommendations were brought

forward.

The indications are that the strategy that was in place in

the province, that had been developed by the previous

government, needed a tremendous amount of change. We

are changing the system. We are building a continuum of

care, starting with promotion and prevention, community

services and of course the in-bed component. As you

know, we were the government that imposed a moratorium

on the closing of beds in psychiatric facilities which had

been undertaken by the last government, so there are no

more beds closing until such time as we have the commu-

nity services in place. We have recently invested

\$60 million in order to provide the community support that

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES

LEGISLATION

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): In the absence of the Premier, I'll direct my question to the Deputy Premier. As you will know, your Premier made a promise in the Common Sense Revolution to enact an Ontarians with Disabilities Act within your first term of office. You will also know that your Premier promised to resign if he didn't keep any of his promises. Time is ticking away, Minister, and Ontarians who care about this issue, particularly Ontarians with disabilities, want some reassurance.

Today I would like to ask you, Deputy Premier, to commit that Mike Harris will not call an election in Ontario until an Ontarians with Disabilities Act receives first, second and third readings, royal assent and procla-

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): I'd refer this question to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation.

Hon Mrs Witmer: That's exactly what we're doing. We are ensuring that the people who are in need receive appropriate community support, and we have not indicated or made any decision on the development of the north-

western Ontario mental health agency to date.

We continue to review that proposal. I believe we are at a point where we are about ready to make a decision, and I'm very pleased to tell you that the northwest region

has received \$2.4 million in community investment funding so that the community supports can be there for people who suffer from serious mental illness. We will continue to work with the northwest to ensure that you have the appropriate resources to support those people who are seriously mentally ill.

Mr Gravelle: Minister, that's simply not good enough. It's been under your watch that this situation has deteriorated to the point of crisis. It's getting worse.

Psychiatric patients should not be languishing in provincial prisons where their conditions get worse because they're not getting the care or the treatment they need.

Mentally ill offenders don't need to be locked up, they need acute-care beds, comprehensive community treatment centres, 24-hour crisis service, access to psychiatrists and a caring, supportive environment.

In Thunder Bay you've chosen not to fund the assertive broken your commitment to set up a northwestern Ontario mental health agency for my part of the province and

you've not dealt with the fact that we're 12 psychiatrists short in Thunder Bay.

Minister, you need to do more. You need to confirm today that you'll properly fund this needed system of care so that people who need care in Thunder Bay, Toronto and

across the province are not thrown in jail instead of receiving the care they need.

Hon Mrs Witmer: That's exactly what we're doing. We are ensuring that the people who are in need receive appropriate community support, and we have not indicated or made any decision on the development of the north-

western Ontario mental health agency to date.

Hon Isabel Bassett (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): I just want to say that of course

this government is committed to bringing in an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Over the summer, as you are well aware, we have sent out our discussion paper to over 7,000 interested parties, we have had consultations, led by me and by my parliamentary assistant, in eight communities right across the province, we have met with representatives from 283 groups and organizations and we've received over 240 submissions from individuals who want to talk about priorities for preventing and removing barriers to people with disabilities, and they want to add what could be in the legislation and what could complement that legislation. We have been moving forward on this very important initiative and we are committed to following through. You will be hearing more about that as time goes by.

Ms Lankin: You've fudged the answer. They wanted a clear commitment that there will not be an election call until this legislation is passed. Quite frankly, they are concerned that your government isn't listening.

You dragged your feet for three years and then in July you released the discussion paper that you put out and you said that the consultation had to be over and done with in the month of August. You forced it through on people and they said that's not enough time, but you went ahead and you made them respond in that time frame. After all that rush, for over a month the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee have been waiting for you to release the results of the consultation with them so they can provide you with their feedback.

The commitment I want from you now, today, is that you will release the consultation results by the end of this week to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee so they can provide you with feedback, and that you will meet with them to receive their feedback before any final decisions are taken with respect to the content of the legislation.

As you know, you've committed to introducing the legislation this fall, so there's a time crunch coming. Will you release the information by the end of the week, and will you give us a commitment today that you will meet with the committee before any final decisions are taken with respect to the content of the act?

1500

Hon Ms Bassett: I was waiting for the question. The member for Beaches-Woodbine was there for five years, and you did not bring in such an act, although the members of the Ontario disabilities committee were waiting breathlessly, trying to get you to do something. We have taken the steps that no other government has done. We are committed to doing it. We have already forwarded my reply to David Lepofsky that we would meet with him in the next week or so. He knows that. We have the results. We are meeting with him. You had five years to do nothing. We are not going to be hurried up one more week to get the results just because you have asked the question. He knows that we are

going to meet with him. I am totally happy with what we have done —

Ms Lankin: Oh, I'm sorry, Isabel. My goodness, I expected instant action because I asked the question.

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [children's issues]): Do you remember Gary Malkowski's bill? Your government wouldn't even support your own member's private bill on disabilities.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Minister, can you come to order, please.

DRINKING AND DRIVING

Mr John L. Parker (York East): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. All too often we hear reports of deaths on our roads and highways as a result of drinking and driving. The people who are responsible for these deaths don't realize that when they get behind the wheel of a car they hold in their hands the lives of countless other people.

The good news is that tough new measures came into effect this morning that will help keep drinking drivers off our roads. Minister, I wonder if you could update the House this afternoon as to what some of these measures are.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Transportation): I'd like to thank the honourable member for York East for the question. As members might know, as of midnight last night this government, which has an exemplary record on combating drinking and driving, went further to combat this tragic offence.

I'd like to acknowledge that it didn't start with this government. Margaret Marland, when she was an opposition member, carried this banner for years, and we have acted on the wise sentiments of Margaret Marland. We've introduced mandatory education programs for first-time drinking and driving offenders, and repeat offenders will have mandatory assessment and education or treatment programs. We've introduced increased suspension periods: on a second conviction, a three-year licence suspension; on a third conviction, a lifetime licence suspension, reducible to 10 years with an interlock device; on a fourth conviction, a lifetime suspension with no appeals.

Beginning this morning, we've introduced an increased catchment period. Drinking and driving convictions will now stay on the driving record for 10 years, up from five years.

I am very proud of this record. I think it's a record that all of the members of this House can be proud of. We want to get at this problem more than any other jurisdiction and we're following through.

Mr Parker: Thank you very much, Minister. I know that all the members of this House appreciate the need to keep our roads safe from drinking and driving.

What I'd like to know specifically, is the message getting out there? Are people taking their driving privilege seriously and has there been a reduction in drinking and driving in crashes?

Mr John Gerritsen (Kingston and The Islands):

Why don't you tell the AG's office to get more people out there?

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): You want to

come to order, right? Minister?

Hon Mr Clement: I do believe the message is getting

out there. In the last decade there has been a 40% reduc-

tion in crashes involving drinking drivers, but that is not

enough. Drinking and driving is still the largest single

criminal cause of death in Canada.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the stake-

holders, in particular OCCID, MADD and BACCHUS,

who have played a central role in bringing this bill into

effect. I think, working together with all of the stake-

holders, we can implore everyone to drink and drive

responsibly. Always appoint a designated driver or hire a

cab, and please, drive safely.

HIGHWAY 3 BYPASS

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): I have a question

for the Minister of Transportation. Just over a week ago a

20-year-old woman died needlessly. She was the innocent

victim of a dangerous driver. This accident happened on a

25-kilometre stretch of what is known as the Highway 3

bypass in Essex county. There were four deaths last year,

there have been four deaths this year and over 300 acci-

dents in the two years.

There are solutions out there. You could four-lane the

highway, you could have increased OPP presence, you

could use photo radar. Minister, you can help save lives on

this stretch of highway. I wrote to you last week and I

asked if you would assemble a team of experts from the

MOT, your ministry, the OPP and others. What action

will you take to help stop this carnage on the Highway 3

bypass?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Transportation):

I'd like to thank the honourable member for the question.

Of course, we did have a tragedy on that road, and obvi-

ously sympathies go out to the family, the survivors of the

tragic loss on that particular stretch of highway.

I can tell the honourable member — and he asks the

question in good faith, I recognize that — that this mini-

stry has just initiated plans to initiate a planning study to

develop a strategy for the future transportation needs of

this particular section of Highway 3, including the possi-

bility of future widening. I can tell the honourable member

that we will look at both short-term and long-term recom-

mendations.

My personal view is that despite the fact of low traffic

counts on this particular stretch of road, we have to look at

it from a safety point of view. If there's a way that we can

improve the safety on this particular road, I believe that

we can work together to do that.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environ-

ment, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I

PROPERTY TAXATION

PETITIONS

1510

get back to your riding.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): You can now

fair this weekend.

Mr Speaker, for the advice of other members, I will be

joining with the many citizens of Metcalfe at their annual

fair this weekend.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I present a petition on behalf of some of my constituents. It goes like this:

"Whereas the Minister of the Environment has the right to designate private corporation proposals for full environmental assessments;

"Whereas the Superior Industrial Rail proposal for a heavy industrial park on 6th Line in Sault Ste Marie, Ontario, is to be located in a river valley adjacent to the Root River and over a designated aquifer recharge area;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislature support the Minister of the Environment in designating the Superior Industrial Rail proposal for a full environmental assessment as provided for in the Environmental Assessment Act of Ontario."

I support these people in that request to the minister and encourage him to go ahead with the environmental assessment. I sign my name to the petition.

ABORTION

Mr Bob Wood (London South): I have a petition signed by 173 people. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario health system is overburdened and unnecessary spending must be cut; and

"Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury or illness and abortions are not therapeutic procedures; and

"Whereas the vast majority of abortions are done for reasons of convenience or finance; and

"Whereas the province has the exclusive authority to determine what services will be insured; and

"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require funding for elective procedures; and

"Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is in fact hazardous to women's health; and

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded over 45,000 abortions in 1993 at an estimated cost of \$25 million;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cease from providing any taxpayers' dollars for the performance of abortions."

STUDENT SAFETY

Mr David Caplan (Ortioro): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the safety of our children is of the utmost importance; and

"Whereas the safety of students should not be sacrificed to tax cuts; and

"Whereas the provincial government has significantly cut the transportation budget for the Metro school boards;

"Whereas under the provincial government's ill-conceived Bill 160 there is no flexibility for boards to make up for those cuts; and

"Whereas school bus service has been cut as a result, which is very hazardous to the safety of young children

who now have to cross major intersections alone and walk an unsafe distance and route in order to get to school;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to repeal Bill 160 immediately; and

"Further, be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario instruct the Minister of Education and Training to restore meaningful funding to the transportation budget of our schools rather than risk the lives of thousands of young students; and

"Further, be it resolved that the Honourable Dave Johnson, Minister of Education and Training, takes responsibility for his government's funding cuts rather than passing the buck to school boards who have no control over provincial government spending cuts."

I agree wholeheartedly with this petition and I affix my signature hereto.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): My petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the Harris government's downloading to municipal taxpayers is directly responsible for the \$36.3-million shortfall to the region of Hamilton-Wentworth; and

"Whereas the Harris government 'downloading' is directly responsible for creating a property tax crisis in our region; and

"Whereas the Harris government, while boasting about its 30% tax cut which benefits mainly the wealthy, is making hard-working families, seniors, homeowners and businesses pay the price with outrageous property tax hikes and user fees for services; and

"Whereas city and regional councillors are being unfairly blamed and forced to explain these huge tax hikes, Hamiltonians know that what's really going on is that they are being forced to pay huge property tax increases to fund Harris's 30% tax giveaway to the rich; and

"Whereas homeowners, including seniors and low-income families, are facing huge property tax increases ranging from several hundred to thousands of dollars; and

"Whereas the Harris government 'downloading' has led to huge property tax increases for business that will force many small and medium-sized businesses in Hamilton-Wentworth to close or leave the community, putting people out of work; and

"Whereas Hamilton-Wentworth is proposing that the Harris government share in the costs of an expanded rebate program, worth about \$3 million region-wide;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that the Harris government immediately eliminate the \$38-million down-loading shortfall that is devastating and angering homeowners as well as killing businesses in Hamilton-Wentworth."

I proudly add my name to those of these petitioners.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mrs Barbara Fisher (Bruce): I would like to present

a petition today on behalf of some of the constituents of my riding. The petition to the Ontario Legislature reads as follows:

"To introduce a proportional correction in the Ontario Election Act.

"Whereas the current electoral system allows for large majority governments to be elected in the Ontario Legislature with the support of less than 50% of the voters; and

"Whereas in a democratic election voters should be free to vote for the candidate who best represents them;

and

"Whereas every voter casts only one vote, and every vote cast, whether for the winner of a constituency or not, should count to elect a member of the provincial Parliament; and

"Whereas voters have the right to fair representation in the Legislature; and

"Whereas modern democracies from New Zealand to Germany to Japan have adopted a mixed-member proportional (MMP) electoral system; and

"Whereas with the new redistribution of boundaries in Ontario the number of MPs will be reduced from 130 to 103;

"We respectfully request that the Ontario Election Act be modified so that the residual votes in each constituency (ie the votes not used to elect the winner of that constituency) be cumulated with the residual votes of all other constituencies and used to elect an additional 26 MPs. They would be selected from published party lists, in proportion to the total number of residual votes for each political party."

I affix my name to the top.

MUNICIPAL RESTRICTING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has announced its intentions of dumping the financing for ambulances, social housing and public health care services on to the backs of municipalities; and

"Whereas this irresponsible action will create a shortfall of more than \$18 million for local governments in St Catharines and the Niagara region; and

"Whereas local representatives in St Catharines and the Niagara region will be forced to either raise property taxes by as much as \$200 per household or cut services;

and

"Whereas Mike Harris called municipal representatives 'whiners' when they tried to explain to him that his proposal was unfair and would create gaps in important services such as the delivery of public health care services; and

"Whereas the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing accused local representatives of being opportunistic simply because they attempted to point out that the

HOSPITAL RESTRICTING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the Harris funding cutbacks are having a devastating impact on hospitals and patient care across Ontario, and have resulted in an anticipated \$38-million deficit at the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp hospitals; and

"Whereas the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp hospitals will receive \$4 million less in revenue from the Ministry of Health and other sources; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris funding cuts are causing a crisis in hospital care in Hamilton-Wentworth, with hospitals facing huge deficits, cuts to patient care and bed closings; and

"Whereas Mr Scott Rowand, president of the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp's hospitals, spoke out recently in the Hamilton Spectator saying, 'For the first time in my career, I don't know how to fix this problem other than an awful lot of closures of programs and services needed by the community'; and

"Whereas Mr Rowand went on to say: 'We need more cash in the system and we need it now. And that is cash to deal with the issues that we are dealing with today. Don't ask us to do anything more because people in the system are at their limit.'"

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that the Harris government stop underfunding Ontario's hospitals to fund tax cuts for the wealthy and act immediately to restore funding to the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp hospitals so they can continue providing quality health care services to the people of Hamilton-Wentworth."

I am totally in support of this and proudly add my name along with those of the petitioners.

1520

GERMAN HERITAGE

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): I have a petition signed by a couple of hundred people from in and around my riding of Kitchener.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the people of German descent have been a part of Ontario's history since the days of pre-Confederation; and

"Whereas the German culture has always been an integral component of the cultural mosaic of Ontario; and
"Whereas we wish to demonstrate official recognition of the positive contribution of German heritage in the province of Ontario;
"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to pass the bill entitled the German pioneers day act and we respectfully petition the government of Ontario to designate the day following Thanksgiving Day as the date of the annual German pioneers day;"
I am pleased to sign my signature.

DIABETES EDUCATION SERVICES

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): I have a petition that reads:
"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:
"Whereas the Diabetes Education Service in Kenora is a necessary program; and
"Whereas the Harris government has refused to provide long-term funding for diabetes education in Kenora; and
"Whereas the Ministry of Health has acknowledged that the program is cost-effective given the volume of clients seen and the degree of specialization required;
"Therefore we, the undersigned, join with our MPP Frank Miclash in calling upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the Harris government provide long-term, stable funding to the Diabetes Education Service in Kenora."
I have affixed my name to that petition as well.

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I'm proud to present the first of many petitions containing the signatures of thousands of Hamiltonians fighting to save the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital.
"To the Honourable Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:
"We, the undersigned citizens of Hamilton and the surrounding communities, beg leave to petition the government of Ontario as follows:
"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has announced the closure of the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital; and
"Whereas the government of Ontario, through the Health Services Restructuring Commission, is divesting its responsibility for mental health care without hearing from the community first; and
"Whereas community-based mental health care providers will bear the brunt of this ill-fated decision by being forced to meet what is sure to be an increased demand for their services; and
"Whereas the community pays the price for cuts to mental health;
"Therefore we, the citizens of Hamilton and area who care about quality, accessible and publicly accountable mental health care for all Ontarians, petition the Legislature

lative Assembly of Ontario to immediately set aside all recommendations to divest and/or close the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital and the programs and services it provides, and further, to call for full hearings to seek community solutions to community issues and to democratically decide the future of mental health care for the citizens of Hamilton and area."
Again, I support the citizens of my community by adding my name to this petition.

ABORTION

Mr Bob Wood (London South): I have a petition signed by 31 people. It reads as follows:
"Whereas the Ontario health system is overburdened and unnecessary spending must be cut; and
"Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury or illness and abortions are not therapeutic procedures; and
"Whereas the vast majority of abortions are done for reasons of convenience or finance; and
"Whereas the province has the exclusive authority to determine what services will be insured; and
"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require funding for elective procedures; and
"Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is in fact hazardous to women's health; and
"Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded over 45,000 abortions in 1993 at an estimated cost of \$25 million;
"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cease from providing any taxpayers' dollars for the performance of abortions."

HOTEL DIEU HOSPITAL

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): The petition reads as follows:
"Since the Hotel Dieu Hospital has played and continues to play a vital role in the delivery of health care services in St Catharines and the Niagara region; and
"Since Hotel Dieu has modified its role over the years as part of a rationalization of medical services in St Catharines and has assumed the position of a regional health care facility in such areas as kidney dialysis and oncology; and
"Since the Niagara region is experiencing underfunding in the health care field and requires more medical services and not fewer services; and
"Since Niagara residents are required at present to travel outside of the Niagara region to receive many specialized services that could be provided in city hospitals and thereby not require local patients to make difficult and inconvenient trips down our highways to other centres; and
"Since the Niagara hospital restructuring committee used a Toronto consulting firm to develop its recommendations and was forced to take into account a cut of over \$40 million in funding for Niagara hospitals when carrying out its study; and

"Since the population of the Niagara region is older than that in most areas of the province and more elderly people tend to require more hospital services;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, request that the government of Ontario keep the election commitment of Premier Mike Harris not to close hospitals in our province, and we call upon the Premier to reject any recommendation to close Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines."

I affix my signature as I'm in full agreement.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Renfrew North has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Correctional Services concerning jail closures in eastern Ontario. This matter will be debated today at 6 pm.

VISITORS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): I know I am prohibited by your rules from introducing anybody to the House, but I did want to bring to the attention of the members here visitors from Australia, Mr and Mrs Martin, along with Dr Ronald Groshaw, an eye surgeon from Etobicoke, who are greeting us here today because they believe in the audio signals at crossings for the visually impaired. Welcome to our House.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INSTRUCTION TIME: MINIMUM

STANDARDS ACT, 1998

LOI DE 1998

SUR LES HEURES D'ENSEIGNEMENT : NORMES MINIMALES

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 63, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to instructional time / Projet de loi 63, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne les heures d'enseignement.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to speak to Bill 63, the second of the education bills that the House confronts this week. I enjoyed the submissions of my colleague from Fort William, the minister, Mr Johnson, and a number of other members who spoke earlier this week to this question, which is really a fundamental part of the dispute — some would say it's a core element — currently dividing the teachers and the government.

I note in the bill that, as in most matters today, we have legislation that is essentially enabling. The bill sets out the interpretation for instructional time. I won't bore the

House with a recitation of what constitutes instructional time, except to note that in this bill, under subsection (13) of section 1, the cabinet "may make regulations specifying or describing classes, courses or programs" for any of the above. In other words, we have yet again sweeping regulatory power which essentially means, in this matter as in so many others, that the old balance of educational policy in the province, a balance that involved not just the Ministry of Education, not just teachers, but local communities, has in fact been fundamentally recalibrated.

We now have in Bill 63 what we saw enshrined very clearly and very controversially in Bill 160, a massive transfer of power to the executive branch and to the cabinet in the name of the Minister of Education, who does his business from the 22nd floor of the Mowat Block in the heart of downtown Toronto.

One of my objections about the current government's approach to educational matters is simply that for the first time in 150 years we have a provincial government that has decided that massive centralization, all power to the minister, all power to the cabinet in Toronto, is somehow the solution to the complex array of challenges and pressures facing public education in Ontario.

1530

I can appreciate how, in the ideological and culture war that the right wing has managed to bring forward on the education front, the current government, Mr Johnson, Mr

Harris and colleagues, would like to have it that way. They have clearly developed a transparent frustration with the fact that they have not, in the past, had all the levers, that there are these pesky local authorities, there are these talkative communities and these highly organized, very well financed and very well funded teacher federations that operate centrally here in the provincial capital, regionally out in communities like southwestern Ontario and my part of eastern Ontario and, yes, in every one of the 5,000 schools that we fund in the province. That is not a situation that the current right-wing crowd in Mike Harris land appreciate very much.

I simply make the point that Bill 63 continues the pattern of Bill 160. That pattern is power from the communities, from the local schools, and increasingly power concentrated in the executive and regulatory authority of the one Minister of Education at 900 Bay Street, the 22nd floor of the Mowat Block. I never thought, in this world of radical revolution that these Tories promised a few years ago, we were going to get this. I thought it was power to the people, not more power to the minister, more power to the educators at the ministry. But that's what this bill does. Make no mistake about it; the bill is very clear. All of the residual authority and more goes to the centre, goes to the minister.

I say as someone who's been there, I can't imagine, even if you wanted all that power, how you are effectively going to manage the exercise of that power on a daily basis for the 5,000 schools and the two million students who go to school in communities as large as downtown Toronto and as far distant as a rural school in Berwick or Stratton in the Rainy River district 1,500 kilometres

northwest of this metropolitan community in which we

now find ourselves.

If there has been a success and a genius of school pro-

gramming in the province of Ontario over the decade, I

think it was that direction that Dr Ryerson set a long time

ago, a partnership, a balance between central direction

and local input and a real measure of meaningful local

control. I can understand and I share with the government

a certain frustration about a certain imbalance that may

have developed over the past number of years. I accept my

share of responsibility for perhaps allowing that imbal-

ance to develop to the extent it did.

I am one, quite frankly, who does believe that there are

important aspects of some of the reform package that the

government has advanced that ought to be supported. I

said that the other day; I say it again this afternoon. I, for

one, strongly endorse testing. I believe in it. I think the

leader of the third party made a very good point that one

must understand that testing beyond the ideology, beyond

the culture war, is a complex matter.

I often wonder how Mike Harris — I'd better not get

personal, because that wouldn't be very nice. But you

know, test scores are —

Interjections.

Mr Conway: I want to be frank. Listen, you want to

see test scores? You want to see results? I'll give them to

you. I want to know what you're going to do about them.

Let me be very blunt. The test scores in the Annex and in

Don Mills are going to be much more impressive than they

will be in the Jane-Finch corridor, without a doubt.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): How do

you know?

Mr Conway: Well, I can tell you that is a reality. I'm

not happy about that. That's a reality. That reality speaks

much more to broad socio-economic patterns than it does

to the school system. I don't say that to insult anyone but

it is a reality. We know that. We can go into all of our

communities. I can take you into my own community in

Pembroke and I can show you a correlation between so-

cio-economic status and test scores. We all know that. If

you think that some kind of debate about just testing the

kids is going to be the end of that matter, you are seriously

misaken.

My concern as well in this whole debate is that it is so

much more political and cultural than it is real. I have

been flooded in recent days by a number of communica-

tions from absolutely irate parents and teachers about

government advertising, some of which I have not seen. I

haven't seen this clock ad that apparently is running. I'm

going to tell you that young teachers, as well as middle-

aged and older teachers, many of whom are traditional

supporters of the current government, are infuriated by the

misleading, and in some cases my mail would tell me, in

the point of view of the teachers, malicious misrepresen-

tation that very expensive taxpayer-funded government ad-

campaign creates. I haven't seen the clock ad but I'm

going to tell you, I have in my hand letters that have

arrived — Claxina Field, for example, writes me from

taken.

As I said the other day, and I repeat this afternoon, you

as a government, Mr Harris, Mr Johnson and colleagues,

will reap what you sow. A number of initiatives that ought

to be proceeded with that are good policy — if you think

that program is going to be effectively implemented with

an open assault on the teaching profession, you are mis-

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One of the real problems that central governments, whether national, state or provincial, have faced in the last 15 to 20 years is that there has been a very real gulf between program development and program implementation. The people who are developing the programs have no understanding of what it means to effectively deliver the programs on the spot. It is a very fair criticism of the government of which I was a part. The activist Liberal progressive governments of the 1970s and 1980s got themselves into very deep trouble and lost a great deal of their legitimacy because however good the intentions were, the program implementation was often much, much less than was advertised and in many cases was transparently contradictory. That which was delivered was very much contradictory to that which was promised.

We hear Minister Johnson say repeatedly: "We're putting more money into the schools. We're doing this and we're doing that." Well, I noticed the other night — and I read part of this. Let me come back to it.

Peter Hiscott is the director of education for the Renfrew county board. Peter is a long-time educator, a very resourceful, creative and deeply committed public servant and educator. I think it's fair to say, and if Peter were here he would probably want me to say, that he is not any kind of opponent of the current government. We're not talking about some flag-waving Liberal here, I don't think. I have the highest regard for Mr Hiscott.

What did he say the other night in a report to the Renfrew county board? I repeat, my boards in Renfrew county are apparently, under this scheme, boards that are to benefit. I'm told, in looking at the global numbers, the Renfrew county separate board is in overall terms apparently going to be somewhat better off and the Renfrew public board is apparently about the same. It's not quite as well off as the Renfrew separate but it's certainly not going to lose as much as some other public boards. I think it's going to be roughly neutral.

What did Peter Hiscott say to the board the other night? I'm quoting from the Pembroke Observer, September 29, an article from Carolyn Levesque about the current situation. Let me just read some of this article.

"Reduced funding has caused problems for secondary school teachers, not class size or increased teaching time as the province suggests, says public school board education director Peter Hiscott.

"Speaking to board members Monday night, Peter Hiscott said a lot of people are getting caught up in 'smoky mirrors,' and not seeing the province's new 'equitable' funding model as the problem it really is.

"Using our board as an example" — that is the Renfrew county public board — "newly legislated class size isn't an issue, as we have already met the recommended 22 students per class," Mr Hiscott said.

"As for teaching time," the director went on to note, "an addition of 25 minutes per week could have easily been addressed without dispute by adding nine minutes per class, per day."

This is the key quote. Quoting the director, Mr Hiscott, directly, "The real reason teachers are having to teach

seven out of eight classes instead of the previous six out of eight is a lack of funding," said director Hiscott.

Under the new funding formula as legislated by Bill 160, there are 20 fewer teaching positions at the secondary level in Renfrew county at the public level this year and apparently there will be an additional reduction of some 20 next year. So we have a public board that is supposed to be benefiting from the new scheme saying not so, that on the instructional side the real problem is not the intrastance of the teachers or their federations, but the reality is that the funding formula, as it is specifically applied to supposedly benefit boards, is causing the problem. Twenty fewer teachers at the secondary level this year and apparently, according to this article, an additional reduction is planned for next year of something like 20 more teachers.

I simply advance that evidence from a very credible third party to this dispute and I think we have to listen to what he says that the government has got to understand that whatever the macro and global take on its policy is, in its local application there are cuts where there are supposed to be improvements and there are reductions where there are supposed to be enhancements.

Alice Roy is a special-ed teacher. She wrote the Pembroke Observer on that selfsame day, September 29, 1998, talking about how expectant she was, as a teacher of special-needs kids, of what the new formula would mean for her and her class. She said: "It's a nightmare. Promises were made and the promises have been broken." There are no benefits to her special-needs kids in Pembroke and area and, to quote her letter to the Pembroke Observer, she's angry and frustrated because she believed the promises made by Mr Johnson and Mr Harris and they have not turned out to be reality.

This is not an opposition politician talking. I'm talking about teachers like Alice Roy and Kathleen Mothershead and Clasma Field. These are the people in the classrooms in an area that's supposed to benefit. There is a dichotomy here, folks. There is a very real problem.

I see in today's Ottawa Citizen an editorial about the new school funding formula for capital purposes, a denunciation from the Ottawa Citizen, no enemy at the editorial board of the current government, and a damning indictment of the government's new capital formula which it says is just flim-flamery; it says it's a scam. I'm not going to read it all because time does not permit. Folks, read the editorial, October 1, "New School Funding Flim-Flam" is an editorial in the Ottawa Citizen today, October 1, 1998.

I simply say there are very real concerns about the difference between what the government has advertised and what the government is delivering and there is a growing resentment and upset on the part of teachers and parents about the scandalous use of now over \$6.5 million of public money to advertise what in many cases are transparent, and in some cases malicious, falsehoods that are aggravating an already serious and explosive situation which this government is almost solely responsible for.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

Mr Bud Wildman (Algonia): I want to compliment my friend from Renfrew North for presenting the views representing the part of eastern Ontario where he resides, views of teachers, of administrators and people involved in education: students, parents and so on.

I think the point he makes is very important. The government argued with the new funding formula that rural boards would benefit and Catholic boards would benefit. They made the argument that urban boards had been well off before and, therefore, they should be prepared to have less funding per student in order to benefit these other boards.

But it's interesting that in Renfrew county, a board that was not hit in funding, unlike Ottawa-Carleton or Toronto, actually goes up a bit in funding, are experiencing serious problems. The problem is that the extra 25 minutes is not really the issue. It's not 25 minutes more that the teachers are opposed to. Their concern is that in reality it's 25 more students because they're teaching an extra class. So the 25 number may be valid but it relates to more students, not more minutes. That means that individual students have less time with the teacher, less individual attention, than they had before because each teacher is teaching more and there is a total fewer number of teachers in the system.

That's the problem.

This government wants to ignore that. They want to take a billion dollars out of the system. They want to rob from the students' education in the province to meet their plans in terms of their cuts to income tax.

1550

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North): I just wanted

to respond to some of the comments made by the member for Renfrew North, particularly the comments he was making about standardized testing and the perception that standardized testing of grade 6 students was somehow to be an imposition, an unfair evaluation of what is happening in the system.

He made some comments which I think are accurate. Nobody could argue with the fact that if you implement the standardized testing system, there are a number of factors that can influence it. He mentioned the areas of the Annex in Toronto or the Jane-Finch corridor in Toronto. We could even take the example further across the province. But the reality is that, yes, there is a differing standard of student performance that is affected by many different factors, socio-economic factors as well as their teaching environment.

But you know what? How do you know what particular schools or districts need attention unless you have a standard to which they can be compared? That is the fundamental underlying reason for a standardized testing system. Teachers participated in the setting of those standardized tests and in the marking of those tests.

The member quotes from God knows, everywhere: newspapers, school boards, individuals, from all over the place. The member for Renfrew North talks like he's an

expert. With due respect to the individual, from your biography, I don't believe you have a spouse in the system, as your leader frequently repeats. I don't believe you have children. I don't believe you have ever taught in the system. You know something? I'm really puzzled as to where your degree of expertise comes from to criticize this process.

Mr Frank Michals (Kenora): I'd just like to compliment the member for Renfrew North on the comments he has brought to the debate. As we know, with his background as a former Minister of Education, he has had a great amount of experience in terms of education in Ontario.

He was indicating something that I've seen a great amount of as well, and that's the fact that we have a government here that seems to have forgotten the people on the front lines, which is our teachers in the classroom, our board members, our trustees, our administration. In the examples he has brought forward, he has indicated that there are a lot of people who are not happy with the system, and again I just cannot believe, as I go through my riding and meet these people on the front lines, that this government has not realized that. They don't seem to want to deal with that particular issue.

He talks about the massive centralization of the control of education in Queen's Park. I come from an area where they have combined three different school boards, the Kenora board, the Dryden board and the Red Lake board, a massive area, and the centralization of power within that board. I've been in constant contact with the director and the members of that board just to find out the problems they are having in one particular board in the province. Again, it's not just the centralization of power here at Queen's Park that is creating a problem, it is the problems that are being created when you have a board made up of three very large areas. There's an effect on education, an effect on the learning that's going on in the classroom.

He also refers to the government advertising. I have to say that this is something I'm hearing about more and more on a regular basis as this government continues to try to put out a message which is not selling: \$6.5 million in government advertising and it is not selling. People want to see something happening within the system; they want to see something happening in our classrooms.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I'm very delighted to have an opportunity to speak to the speech by the member for Renfrew North. I'm always struck that when people are not able to answer the logic and the passion in his arguments, they often resort to ad hominem comments.

There are very few members either now in the Legislature or previously in the Legislature who have kept their ear as close to the ground in their own constituency as the member for Renfrew North. Not only does he do that, but he also has a passion for his responsibility as a legislator to bring their views back here to the Legislature and to ensure that whatever government is in power, whether it is his party or other parties, we are aware of what the people in Renfrew North are thinking.

There are members on the government side, mostly in the rump over here beside us, who seem to think that when people are members of this Legislature and they do the kind of vigorous work that the member for Renfrew North does, somehow they're not doing a job, they don't have a profession. This member is an example of the kind of dedicated member who makes democracy work in Ontario. I find it offensive when a fellow member of this Legislature mocks the efforts that a dedicated member from another constituency makes. I would suggest to the members on the government side that if they kept their ear as close to the ground, if they spoke to their constituents as consistently as this member does, they wouldn't have the kind of hubris that is going to bring them down in the long run around what they've done to education.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Renfrew North has two minutes to respond.

Mr Conway: I thank my colleagues for their very direct observations. I want to say to the member from Brampton, he's right, I am a single person with no kids in the system. That does maybe alter my perceptions to some extent. Since I was elected — I spend, on average, many days a year in school. I happen to have done a couple of classes last week at Opeongo High School in the heart of my county. I go to Queen's University to do a number of classes every year. I'm not boasting; I know other members do it as well. So I think I understand some of what the government wants to change, and I will support it.

You're carrying forward with a number of changes that have been evolving over a number of years. I think you should be supported in that. Trust me, I am a radical conservative in some respects when it comes to testing. I would love to have had Mike Harris and John Snobelen in my class to have administered testing. I would want to know what it was in these smart people that produced some of the difficulties they appear to have had. It wasn't that they lacked the brains.

Mr Hastings: That's offensive.

Mr Conway: It may be a bit offensive, but if you want to talk about testing, let's talk about it. I think Winston Churchill failed English at Harrow. Ulysses S. Grant did very poorly at West Point.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): But he got to West Point.

Mr Conway: He got to West Point, but he didn't do very well. The fact of the matter is that General Ulysses S. Grant actually liked to fight, which was a pretty important quality in a general. I'm sure many others did much better. It turned out that Lincoln had too many of the gang that did well and didn't know how to fight or want to fight. The history of mankind is littered with all kinds of delirious examples of things that testing doesn't pick up.

Should there be testing? Absolutely. The member from Brampton is right: The public has the right to know more than it has known in recent times as to what schools are doing well and what they need to do more of to improve. I'm not opposed to that. I'm opposed to the dichotomy

between what has been promised and what is being delivered, and I'm appalled by the ideological and cultural war that's ripping public education apart at the seams.

Mr Micalash: On a point of order Mr Speaker: I don't believe we have a quorum in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Would you check and see if there's a quorum in the House.

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members. There will be up to a five-minute bell.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mrs Boyd: I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to speak to this severed piece of the previous bill, the piece that created such a problem in the House for those of us who were as concerned as the government about the young people who had been kept out of the classroom for some time. We made the point, of course, that the legislation that was enclosed in Bill 62, both its first iteration and its second iteration, was not going to solve the fundamental problem this government has caused within the school system.

It's extremely important to be very clear who the provocateur is here. The provocateur is this government. This government has taken measures that are very deliberate and are focused on creating a crisis in the school system. They seem to think that by spending millions of dollars on advertising, by standing here and saying one thing that is patently different from what is being experienced in communities, somehow they're going to convince the population of Ontario that's not the case. While it is quite clear from the arguments that frequently occur in here that the members of this government are never swayed by facts or logic, the population of Ontario is. That's why debate is very important in this place.

We see day after day a Minister of Education, a Premier and anybody else they can rope in from the government benches trying to pretend that somehow teachers are being unreasonable when they talk about what is being demanded of them within a school system that has seen almost \$1 billion taken out of that system over the last three years. They try to argue that they're not responsible for the fact that hundreds of schools are likely to close in the province, and they think that by repeating that story over and over again, somehow the rest of the province is going to suspend its disbelief. That isn't going to happen, because you can only fool all of the people for a very short time.

The people of Ontario have already been exposed to a Premier who said that the downward on to municipalities wasn't going to result in increased taxes. They heard that repeated again and again. They saw the government trot out figures that seemed to show that there was a zero bottom line. They know from their trusted municipal officials and from the very strong exposure of the discussions

line is set. He seemed to be pretending that somehow there was lots of time for consultation. There isn't lots of time for consultation. The figures came out the other day and the Thames Valley school board, 15 schools are going to have to close. How can any school board do the kind of consultation with neighbourhoods that it has to do, that's appropriate, that's always been done in this province, before December 31?

1610

You can't do it, and you know that. The minister knew that when he set the rules. The minister knew that if you set the rules so that the teachers' contracts all ended on August 31, chaos was going to result, that there would be chaos, particularly when you were requiring the kind of changes to instruction time, the contractual changes that this minister decreed in Bill 160.

Talk about an agent provocateur; there he is. It's absolutely deliberately trying to sow controversy and dissension within the school system. Teacher union leaders have an obligation to represent their members and to fight against an employer that is trying to change contracts. This government has set it up so that it pretends it's not the employer and it has set up a whole bunch of poor people who are trying to manage an enormous change process within huge districts — for 5,000 bucks a year, I might add — set them up as the fall guys. What's more, the Premier and the Minister of Education, both the previous one and the current one, consistently make comments about how those well-meaning, virtually volunteer citizens are responsible for the chaos in their boards.

When in good faith school boards sat down and negotiated contracts with their teachers, worked through this problem with their teachers, with great difficulty and only where they happened to be fortunate enough to have some reserves that they could work with, this minister sent a letter throwing cold water on those contracts, telling them, "Oh no, you've misunderstood. I hear you've reached an agreement. Well, it isn't good enough, because I'm going to just add another hoop that you have to jump through." Those boards sat down with their teachers and their teachers said: "We don't disagree with spending more time in the classroom. We are prepared to increase the number of contact hours we have in our classrooms. What we aren't willing to do is to take on 25 more students."

This is not an issue of minutes. As the member for Renfrew North pointed out, I haven't heard one teachers' group say that they're unwilling to put the extra minutes into the periods with their kids so they can spend a longer time on the subject matter and teach better, but that's not what the government is demanding, that's not what this minister that all that is possible is that you teach more students: 25 more students' papers to mark, 25 more students to counsel, 25 more students to try and make sure that they are able to meet the requirements. That's what this minister is asking. It has nothing to do with 25 minutes a day.

Then we have a Premier who ran and said, "I have no plan to close hospitals," and a Minister of Health who set up a so-called arm's-length committee that was going to do the work of hospital restructuring, and of course is going to close — what is the tally at now? — 32 hospitals, I think.

Mr Conway: Thirty-five.

Mrs Boyd: There we are. Of course, the minister and the Premier keep saying: "I haven't closed any hospitals. I didn't do that. The commission I created, the commission our government appointed, the commission our government pays, did it." Quite frankly, there's a fair bit of case law about where the responsibility lies when responsible elected governments appoint bodies that do things that hurt their constituents. You may think that's at arm's length, but no one believes you. Everyone knows whose decisions have resulted in those hospital closures.

I would hasten to say that I do not think all of those changes are bad. I do believe we needed to restructure the health care system and I do believe that there are ways to have made that restructuring work to improve the health care system. But you can't improve the system by taking out dollars at the same time you're trying to institute massive change. But just as in education, as in community services, this government somehow thinks that when you withdraw dollars you make services better.

That's what they did in the hospital system. While they may stand here day after day, apparently with straight and concerned faces, trying to claim that this isn't hurting the patients of Ontario, no one believes them, because in community after community our neighbours, our families, our communities are experiencing the problems that are caused by this government's policy. They don't believe a government that just stands there and says, "Smile, don't worry, everything is going to be all right," because it isn't. When we come to education, we saw an amazing display this afternoon of exactly the same kind of behaviour. When you keep repeating the behaviour, people start really getting it. The Minister of Education stands over there and says: "I'm not closing any schools. Our government is not closing any schools. I'm sorry, folks. You're not going to get away with this one. The people of Ontario understand very well that with Bill 104, Bill 160, Bill 62, Bill 63 and whatever else you dream up tomorrow, you are reducing the educational opportunities in the publicly funded education system for the children of Ontario. The minister had the gall to stand there and say that they want consultation. He knows very well that the dead-

The teachers' unions have been very clear that they were prepared to increase the amount of time spent in the classroom, it's the number of students that they teach. All of the research in pedagogy shows that when you add to the numbers of students that you're trying to teach, particularly at the high school level, particularly in the more complex areas, you lose the quality of the contact between the teacher and the student.

What's it all about, folks? It's all about cutting costs.

It's all about cutting the numbers of teachers in the system. The minister stood here proudly and refuted the notion that there were going to be lots of teachers losing their jobs. Why? There's only one reason it hasn't been the bloodbath it looked like it would be just last year. That's because the government took advantage of the fact that the teacher associations were prepared to protect their members to the extent that they could by agreeing to use pension plans for an early retirement scheme.

Pension plans are wages that people forgo. Pension plans are not some pot of gold out there that has no relationship to what people earn. Pensions are forgone wages. All through the history of the pension plan teachers accepted lower wages to have a good plan, and they did, and what did the government do up until our government gave the teachers equal control over their pensions? They frittered it away so that the returns on those pension funds were very low.

When we came into office after all those years of Tory rule — and, I might add, the Liberal era — there was an unfunded liability in the teachers' pension fund and it was a major effort to turn that around. But the biggest part of that effort was not just the government's putting back into those pensions some of the dollars that they had taken out, that they had literally removed from the forgone wages of teachers to fund many other schemes. It also meant that the management was better, the management was done on behalf of the people in the pension plan and the returns were remarkable: not the 3% that the superannuation plan had earned for years and years because the dollars were being put into government projects all over the place with no return to the pensioners, but very good returns, and the result was, of course, that in very short order a huge surplus was built up in the plan.

The teachers' associations could see the writing on the wall, could hear the beating of the drums in the background, knew they had been targeted and scapegoated by this government and knew it was important to try and make sure that attrition of some sort or another, preferably early retirement, eased the burden for people in the teaching profession. The writing was on the wall about the numbers of people who were going to lose their jobs as a result of the draconian imposition of Bill 160 and as a result of the kind of legislation that Bill 63 is, which limits what it means to be a teacher in school. So they negotiated and, yes, many teachers, completely beaten down, discouraged, upset, disgusted by the kinds of attacks that government had made on the teaching profession and on their life's work, left the system.

This bill is all about making sure that the number of teachers in the system is reduced permanently. That's exactly what this is about. When you define "instructional time" the way this government defines "instructional time," what you are saying is that a huge portion of what teachers did for me when I went through school, did for all of us when we went through school, did for our children, is no longer considered valued.

Yet this minister has the nerve to try and say that these teachers, having been treated this way, should be willing, on their volunteer time to do after-school programs, to do mentoring programs, to do all sorts of things, work that when it was valued, when it was seen as part of the task, when it was able to be defined as part of the task, they were more than willing to do, not directly for pay — it's always been a voluntary part of it — but willing to do because they saw it as rounding out their job in working with young people.

This government has effectively destroyed the kind of relationship that had built up over many years between teachers and their students, their students' parents and their communities.

I think the good news is that people aren't going to buy it. Parents aren't going to buy this. Every effort this government makes to try and blacken the reputation of teachers is backfiring. Parents want their children in the schools, but they want the teacher who spends so much of the proportion of their children's working hours with them to be a happy, motivated, dedicated teacher — someone who can be proud of his or her job, someone who sees their job as valuable to the students but indeed to the community as a whole.

This government is destroying that relationship, just as it's trying to destroy public education altogether.

1620

The Deputy Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): It's my respectful duty here to respond to the member for London Centre and briefly remark on a couple of things; I will have time later this afternoon to make some longer comments. Respectfully, on a couple of points she made really in both areas, she should examine her own government's record. For instance, in health care, you would certainly know that your previous Minister of Health was responsible — and I give full credit to Ms Lankin, the member for Beaches-Woodbine, for starting that.

Mr Wildman: What does this have to do with health? Mr O'Toole: I'm responding, Mr Wildman, to comments. You should be listening to your member and you would know. She was talking about hospital closures. You would know that there were a number of beds and there

was a rationalization process called the acute care study, started by your ministry, which started the Health Services Restructuring Commission. Respectfully, do your homework when you're going to blame this government. The only difference between us and you is that we're actually doing something about it. I'll cover this further in my comments during my time.

With respect to the other thing you talked about, the closing of schools, clearly the decision hasn't been made for many years. As a trustee I remember going through the very politicized issue of dealing with surplus facilities or facilities in the wrong location. Back in the old days — the funding model changed in 1982 and they were trying to swap schools between the different boards, the public and the separate boards, and there was a great outcry at that time. The history there again, member for London Centre, is that on average in each term in excess of 100 schools have been closed by the boards' decisions — reluctantly, I might add.

I'm going to point out one difference. In Toronto somewhere between 80 and 120 schools are currently on their books as capital which cost operational dollars to maintain. It's the use of capital that's being misused, and this addresses that issue.

The Deputy Speaker: I just want to remind the members that their comments are to be made to me and not to other individual members.

Mr Conway: The member from London makes a couple of essential points that have to be understood. When we say that Bill 160 and its companions, Bill 63 particularly, centralize authority, we mean by that simply this: The government of Ontario has taken on to itself at the central level all the critical questions of funding school boards.

As is quite plain from the evidence of people in the field, the fundamental difficulty with the institutional time argument is very simply this: The funding formula, which the government of Ontario has decided by itself and exclusively distributes and implements across the province, intends to force a seven out of eight in place of a six out of eight on average across the secondary panel of publicly funded education. That will practically mean that fewer teachers will be expected to teach more students in fewer classes across the second-year system. That is the reality of the funding formula. You can agree with it or you can disagree with it, but make no mistake about what the formula intends.

In the school space debate, it is precisely the same. It is a centralized formula based here in Toronto that will force local boards — and not because of decisions made in Durham or Pembroke or St Catharines — in their application of the Toronto, centralized ministry formula to close schools by the score in large cities and in rural areas. The skeptic in me says I hope and I pray that this government is crazy enough to march forward with that, because if they think they've had lightning and thunder before, get ready. You ain't seen nothing yet.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I want to compliment my colleague from London Centre,

and I would urge members of the government to heed what she says. We are talking about an individual who has been in this place for eight years as an elected MPP, obviously has gone through the Ontario school system herself, was a parent of a child who went through the entire system and has been the Minister of Education for the province of Ontario. I would think that regardless of what party you come from or what your philosophy is, listening to the viewpoint of someone with that background and that experience can only help.

I want to emphasize, in the little over a minute I have, one of the points my colleague for London Centre raised. That's the fact that the former education minister Snobelen got caught out on videotape saying in front of a conference of education staff people that one of the things his government had to do, one of his responsibilities, was to create a phony crisis in order to justify the kinds of things they're doing. When my colleague talks about the chaos that exists, unfortunately for the government in this case it's not something where one of your ministers can merely stand up and say, "Black is white and night is day."

The people of Ontario know there's chaos out there. They know that our schools have been shut down. They know that your legislation that was passed on Monday hasn't changed a thing in terms of making the school system any better. We know now, as a result of the number of schools that are having to close, that there's more chaos coming.

All of it was by design, because then you stand up and say, "We're the only ones doing something." What you don't say is that that "something" is devastating the system, and that's why you had the phony crisis: to hide

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Thank you, questions and comments? The member for Durham East.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I —

The Acting Speaker: Take your seat, please. I just came into the chair. Just one second, please. Sorry about comments.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: No, I'm sorry, member for St Catharines. This is my fault. I just came into the chair and forgot to be advised as to what was happening here. It's the Conservatives' time.

Mr Bradley: But don't they have to stand?

The Acting Speaker: Well, I didn't see him. I perhaps didn't look that way. The member for Etobicoke-Kensdale.

Mr Hastings: An observation I would like to make regarding this bill — since we're talking about lots of things that aren't in the bill, which deals with instructional time — is that the member for London Centre was talking about how it ought to be, how it used to be. We have to move into the 21st century.

If we look back at the status quo — people ask, where has all the money gone over the years? One of the clear

examples that came up during the restructuring of the Toronto District School Board relates to the cost monthly of 45 early-retired education officials, who will assume benefits from whatever age they were — 53, 56, 57 — up to age 65. The cost to the taxpayers in the city of Toronto for that particular line item in a budget is \$9,000 monthly.

Mr Wildman: You said you wanted them retired.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Algoma, come to order.

Mr Hastings: Yes, we want them retired at a reasonable price, not at the astounding cost that's evidenced in that particular item.

Laughter.

Mr Hastings: Isn't it amazing that the members oppo-

sition laugh at such a minor cost, as they would consider, when in point of fact, what could that particular money have bought in terms of classroom education? Quite a lot.

The other thing that a lot of the folks across the way seem to forget is that when they make the comments about the changes in the taxation of education in this province, even those folks across the way at the time strongly and vigorously advocated that the costs of education be re-

moved off property taxes. What has happened? Voila. We have done that.

The Acting Speaker: The member for London Centre.

Mrs Boyd: Thank you, Speaker. It's always very interesting. Let's just be really clear about what has hap-

pened here and what this government has done. It has taken away any kind of local autonomy, any ability of local school boards to raise money. Yes, we always advo-

cated, as the NDP, a larger share of the money to come from the province. I believe our policy is 60% of funding, a restoration of 60% of funding. But we always believed

there should be some local autonomy to deal with the issues of flexibility that local communities have. You have denied that.

Your experience on the school board, member for Durham East, doesn't apply any more. Don't bring the expert-

ence you had three years ago to this debate, because the reality is totally different for school board members now because of Bill 104 and because of Bill 160. It just simply

is a totally different ball game. It's got nothing to do, as it used to, with not having enough kids to have a viable school. That's the decision you made. The decision now

has to do with the central body, the central Minister of Education deciding whether or not you have enough money to educate those students or whether you have to

bus them for miles and miles so that you have the viable number that that minister in Toronto decided you should have in Port Perry. It's absurd. It's absolutely ridiculous.

As for the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, you know, when the day comes that you are advocating that public servants should have less of a severance package, less of a benefit when they are severed from their jobs, than public

interests and corporations do —

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. The member's time has expired. Further debate?

Interjection.

I want to start by looking back to the member for Renfrew North. I have a lot of time for his comments. He is a well-informed member, a previous Minister of Education. In fact, when I was on the school board he was the Minister of Education, and although he doesn't remember, I had occasions to meet him. But the debate today that we're focusing on is Bill 63. For those watching and for those listening, I think it's important for us to understand that this is entirely an issue on instructional time in the classroom, and everyone here knows that this is very critical, very controversial.

If you look back, and I will in a few moments, look to the history, I think it's important to put in perspective precisely those portions of the bill, which I'll read for you, that instructional time is trying to arrive at. I think there are members on both sides of the House who realize that change, if done properly, is indeed improvement of quality of education in Ontario. In fact, I suggest to you that many teachers and many educators believe that this is an important opportunity to look in a positive vein at how we do this change. So they're trying to bring some clarity to this. It's not a centralized issue. It's been discussed as far as back as the Bégin-Caplan report in 1994, and prior to that there were many studies that dealt with the same issue.

It could be argued that the current semesterizing system is not to the advantage of average students. Long 76-minute periods I believe, for students who have learning difficulties, are a disadvantage. If you look to the debate during that time for moving from the traditional annualized curriculum year to the semesterized curriculum year, I think you'll find that performance results and retention have gone down. Many students don't get the chance to take a second language and mathematics for two semesters. They can lose the whole context of continuity. That's another debate.

I'm going to clarify a few things here. "For the purposes of this section, a classroom teacher in a secondary school is assigned to provide instruction" time "when he or she is assigned in a regular timetable" etc. "A course or program that is eligible for credit" — the credit is 110 hours — and a credit also for special education, remedial classes — this is instructional time, important instructional time — "to assist one or more pupils in completing a course or program that is eligible for credit," English as a second language, apprenticeship programs and courses and programs specified or described in the regulations.

Mrs Boyd: It's a Bay street formula and you know it.

Mr Hastings: Oh, big, fat government.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. Further debate?

The member for Durham East.

Mr O'Toole: In the next election my riding is just called Durham so it'll be much easier for you next term.

I would actually like to start and pay some respect to, and perhaps beg forgiveness from, the member for London Centre, not knowing that she was part of a government that fundamentally started many of the reforms admirably in education. I will review that in the course of my discussion, and I mean that sincerely.

1640

When my wife went back teaching, respectfully, that's when I went on local council because I felt there was a conflict, because about 80% of their budget is wages and benefits. How could I sit on the negotiating committee and negotiate the benefits that would affect my wife? So we've changed that. Members would know we've changed that, and I think it's a good, acceptable change. There are many members of society who want to contribute. We shouldn't just have one group represented in this process.

I want to look back to the history. Respecting Mrs Boyd from London Centre and Mr Conway, as well as the member for Algoma — I believe you were Minister of Education at one time —

Interjection.

Mr O'Toole: You were pretty well every other minister, but the member for Dovercourt I remember was the

I've heard the member for Kennew North today clearly support reform in education and clearly the previous government supported reforms in education. That is a little bit of a segue into where I'm going here to give you a broader view. Reforms in education by themselves are not new. They are absolutely critical for the future of our children, to because public money is being spent for our children, to advance them for the future. That's the whole purpose of it and that's why I got involved as a parent. That's why I'd encourage every parent to get involved in their child's education. The parent is the primary educator. They have been somehow disqualified from participating in the process because they don't have a master's of education or some other academic qualification, but believe me, as an average person I would recommend very highly that you get involved in your children's education, whether it's the parent or school community council, whatever function. It would be more inclusive in these school community councils. They shouldn't be run by one group. There should be participation from every group, people with learning disabilities right through the whole spectrum.

I've gone on a bit on that, but on the instructional time — one more small piece there — how do I believe we can arrive at the 250 minutes? If there are four periods and they are each 60 minutes, that's 240 minutes, and 10 minutes. I'm sure it could be debated how they arrive at that 10 minutes. Whether it's teacher advisory groups, mentoring, I'm fully supportive of it, but it must be contact with students, not some time in the board office reinventing some history curriculum. I mean absolutely critical learning contact, teacher and student. That's the whole purpose of it, and if anyone disagrees with that — because I believe 76-minute periods are almost exhaustive.

On calling 18 students in the past two weeks to ask their opinions — I have a poll, I have their names; they're my constituents — all of them said that no classes, by and large, are actually 76 minutes. They're 76 minutes long, but activities go on in there. Some of it's seat work, some of it's marking, some of it's board work and some of it's actually instructional time. So work on the 60-minute period model. There are 180 teaching days. There are only

There is some degree of flexibility when you look at the definition within the regulations. For brevity I won't go into that, but I'm going to talk about, in instructional time, some of the numbers that come around.

If you look at a couple of articles, and I have a number of them here, there was a very good article in a paper that's not normally given to being friendly to us as a government, in the Toronto Star about a week ago, on September 13, and I'm going to quote it. It deals with teaching time. The title is "Going from Bad to Worse." Teaching time, it says, in Ontario prior to 1998, was three hours and 40 to 50 minutes. The new standard is four hours and 10 minutes. We all know that's some 25 minutes of additional teaching time. For the members to understand, that additional 25 minutes of instructional time amounts to two hours and 50 minutes in the instructional day, and 76-minute periods don't divide into that very equally. So you get into the situation that the school year is made up of two semesters and there are four credits in each semester. That's a total of eight subject times, and they're going to teach seven out of those eight subject times. Provided the periods are 76 minutes, it still doesn't compute to the two hours and 50 minutes. I recognize that's a problem. I believe the board and we should be listening closely to the solutions they've recommended.

Ontario with its teaching time, its amount of instructional time, is still among the lowest provinces in Canada. Not only that, if you look at the number of instructional days that our students are exposed to the material — math, language, science, arts, English — they are really penalized in Ontario. They don't get the same number of instructional days. So we have two factors here. We have fewer instructional days than many jurisdictions in the world and fewer instructional minutes per day. I think the system clearly — it's been demonstrated from that article in the Star and others, and I, respectfully, look beyond the particular government issues that we are given.

In the Globe and Mail on September 23 there's an excellent article and I would urge every member to contact my office and get a copy of it. Contact my constituency office. I send it to people because it's written by an educator and it's a profoundly interesting article. It's Peter Desbarats and he taught at the University of Western Ontario, a widely respected journalist, and it's in the Globe and Mail, which is an intelligent paper, I believe, commenting objectively on the state of the world. In that article Peter Desbarats, without reading it all and boring you, says that this strike strategy and this chaos, as Mr Christopherson often says, is really an articulation of the frustration in the teaching ranks. The individual teachers are indeed frustrated and they have been frustrated for many years. I'll get to my point.

I've been watching this debate since I was a trustee some years ago for a couple of terms in the early 1980s. My qualifications — why am I interested? I was on a parent-teacher association. I have five children. My wife is a teacher, half my family are teachers.

110 hours for a credit. There has got to be time in that.

Work on the numbers.

On the history side of it — this is worth listening to —

we've had an inordinate number of changes in education.

I'm going to list them all here, because I took some time to

think about this with respect to the fact I was going to

speak to this very important issue. We have passed about

five or six bills specifically related to education: Bill 30,

which is the Education Quality and Accountability Office;

Bill 31, which is the College of Teachers, the profession

itself; Bill 104, which is the Fewer School Boards Act —

fewer school boards, less administration; and of course,

Bill 160, which is a very contentious bill. But part of that

rollout was the new educational funding model. There is

also the current bill we are dealing with, which is dealing

with the collective bargaining resolution process and also

the instructional time.

Where did all these bills come from? Were they just

some wild, radical, revolutionary — no, they weren't. In

the context of what I'm talking about, the reforms in edu-

cation were may of them started, respectfully, by the

previous government and prior to that by the previous

Liberal government. I'm going to trace for you in my

small amount of time some of the history of education

reform, long overdue, and it's going to actually surprise a

number of members from the third party and from the

opposition. Of their commitment to education, I think we

should be all parties agreeing, because it's our children's

future; not just my children, it's all of our children. The

pages here, every child deserves a fair opportunity in

education, and if anyone disagrees with that, regardless of

the race, creed, colour, religion, all that stuff, learning

ability, I believe in a quality educational system, but that

means change. The word "change" is something that

certain parties in this discussion refuse to deal with. They

want to run it, and that's the problem. It takes a commu-

nity to raise a child, and that includes everyone.

I'm going to read several press releases here, with your

permission, Madam Speaker. These are quotes, so you can

pick up this material from my office:

"Education and training minister Dave Cooke today,"

January 26, 1995, "received the report of the Royal

Commission on Learning." I wish to congratulate the

members of the commission. That was Gerald Caplan's

report. I've talked to Mr Caplan. I have a lot of respect for

him as an educator, but he has his particular persuasions

as well. "The report contains about 167 recommendations

for changes," within every aspect of Ontario's education

system. I think about what I just said. Those 167 recom-

mendations — this government is using this as a footprint.

We're moving forward with the reforms in education.

Despite the placating and despite the arguments, I believe

As I go through this brief scenario or chronology here,

most of those recommendations are being implemented.

You'll understand the important commitment. Not only the

Education Minister of Education but the previous Minister of

Education and our Premier are fully in support of the

urgency of these reforms in a global context. Our children

deserve an opportunity for the future. Ontario should be

first. I think everyone here would agree with that.

February 17, 1995 — it's almost like a historical chro-

nology here — "Cooke Introduces Comprehensive Test-

ing." The member for Algoma might want to listen up on

this, because H squared today —

Interjection: Howie Hampton.

Mr O'Toole: Yes. For those uninformed, H squared is

an acronym we use here. He today asked a question

denouncing standardized testing. Well, they should have a

Interjection: Politicizing it.

Mr O'Toole: It's politicized. You think it's politi-

cized? It's just oppose because he's third party.

February 17: "All students in grades 3, 6, 9 and 11

across the province will systematically be tested every

year in reading, writing, mathematics," education minister

Cooke announced today.... "This system is the most com-

prehensive student testing in Ontario's history," said Mr

Cooke. "This province needs a long-term, cost-effective

plan for evaluating, reporting and improving students'

performance."

The Premier of the day, Mr Rae, I believe was catching

on at the end. It was too late, though. They were so far off

the scale —

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough-Elliesmere):

Then he brought the social contract in.

Mr O'Toole: They really tried to do significant struc-

turing in municipal finance reform too, but got nailed there

too. No one would support it, because it was change.

That's the problem.

The point I'm making, respectfully: Look to the Han-

sard of today, October 1, 1998. The New Democratic

Party has completely reversed itself. Its former ministers

of education, of which the member for London Centre was

one, the member for Dovercourt was one — there were

several of them — all endorsed this. They were in cabinet.

Now they're still here and they're against it. They're

against quality education, in my view, and they're fight-

ened of the unions, because that's where their support

comes from.

Anyway, I'm going to another one now. By the way,

we passed that bill. They thought about it; we did it. That

bill was Bill 30, education quality, and do you know

what? The opposition Liberals and the third party NDP

voted against quality education. Not this government, not

our Premier. When we announced it today —

Mr Wildman: Just because you named it doesn't mean

it's quality education.

Mr O'Toole: Read this release, Mr Wildman, and you

would find out —

The Acting Speaker: Member for Algoma, come to

order.

Mr O'Toole: The next one is another in the chronol-

ogy of announcements by the previous government, which

had no courage to actually deliver. Lots of announce-

ments, no delivery.

February 13, 1995: "Minister Announces Teachers' Education Reform." We called it, by the way, member for

Algebra, Bill 31, because we did it. That's the difference with us. We're committed to delivering to the people of Ontario. There's no longer the dark, lost decade. That's gone.

This is what it says, and I believe teaching is a profession: "...the standard practices of teachers, the two-year teacher education program, the creation of the College of Teachers, a program framework for professional development for educators," standardizing the profession, like the college of nurses, like the college of dentists, like the law society, like the college of surgeons. A profession is, by definition, self-regulating. That doesn't mean union; it means regulating professional misconduct and those other issues.

1650

I think teachers eventually will endorse this and realize that issues of collective bargaining are different — they need a union — from issues of professionalism. So we've done it, Bill 31; we're getting there.

February 1995: another important announcement by the then Minister of Education, David Cooke, and the Premier, Bob Rae. I have a lot of time for him, actually. He announces that the government makes school councils mandatory.

Mr Wildman: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Is a quorum present?

The Acting Speaker: Clerk, could you check and see if there is a quorum, please.

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is not present, Speaker. *The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Durham East.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So we have school community councils. In fact, we've got the Education Improvement Commission consulting. I attended one of their meetings this week. Parents were there. The process is moving forward, and I think it's important to hear from parents. Everyone here agrees that the parent is the primary educator. They need to have a role. It shows good modelling for the student; their children, in fact.

Another important announcement. Listen to this one; this is really important. February 7, 1995: There again, "Minister of Education Dave Cooke Announces Major Changes in Curriculum." Well, guess what? We've invented, with the help of teachers but with the empowerment of this government, a whole new curriculum, and I'll tell you, many teachers, politics aside, have embraced it.

We're in the midst of some of the most profound changes. Get with the game. Don't look to the past; look to the future. We've moving into a new century, and I believe that if we work together for our students, put the students first, we will find the curriculum coming in for secondary. Many of the professional teachers in my riding are involved in that curriculum. I believe in it. I couldn't care about their politics; I do believe in their professionalism. If they have been hijacked by the union, they have lost the degree of professionalism and the integrity that involves.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Bradley: The people of this province should know that despite the fact that these people have brought in draconian rule changes in this House which severely restrict the amount of debate and remove any of the bargaining opportunities the opposition would have to deal with legislation, the government has produced yet another closure motion, another time allocation motion which chokes off debate.

It might even be different if we were dealing with the rules that were in place for procedures in this House 10 years ago, where there was a lot of time available for debate and a lot of opportunities for the opposition to utilize measures which might gain them some additional hearing time or debate. But here the government has the most restrictive rules in the history of this province, because Mike Harris doesn't like to hear debate on this legislation.

For instance, we will now be, after 5 minutes to 5 this evening, down to 10-minute speeches to deal with an extremely important issue.

Mr Spina: Point of order.

Mr Bradley: When we have this particular motion before us, I know the member would be concerned, were he sitting in the opposition benches or just as a democrat, that you are choking off debate, closing off debate, on a very important bill.

The other might the opposition co-operated with the government in ensuring that a measure would pass this House in one day. We sat into the evening despite the fact it wasn't scheduled. We co-operated. The thanks you get when you co-operate. You always ask for co-operation.

The Toronto Sun editorial will say, "Why don't the opposition be responsible and co-operate?" Here's the thank you for the co-operation. You get hit with yet another motion closing off debate despite the fact you already have rules which are heavily slanted in favour of the government.

The Acting Speaker: You have a point of order, member for Brampton North?

Mr Spina: The member for St Catharines has had nothing to do with this debate in his two-minute comments. I would ask that he be ruled out of order.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

Mr Williamson: I listened carefully to the comments of the member for Durham East with regard to Bill 63 and a number of other changes that have been brought in by this government with regard to education in the province. I note that just as he was speaking the Liberal House leader was tabled by the government House leader closing off debate. This is a motion which will close off debate on second reading. It will not allow for any committee discussion or amendment to Bill 63 and it then will limit this to a time when we are just about, in a couple of minutes, to go into a limitation under the rules of 10 minutes per speech. At a limit of 10 minutes per speech, if every member of the opposition who had not yet spoken participated, it would not take very long to exhaust the time under the rules for second reading debate. The government does not need this motion. Why are they introducing it? Simply, I guess, because they heard the member for Durham East's speech and said: "We've got to close this off. Enough is enough. We can't take it any more."

The member said — this is a quote; I wrote it down when he said it — "There have been an inordinate number of changes to education under this government." He's quite right. There have been an inordinate number of changes. If he understood what the word "inordinate" meant, he wouldn't have used it.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): It's an excellent speech that the member for Durham East gave. It was an interesting review. He walked through the last year or so of the previous government, bringing forth some of the comments the Minister of Education for the NDP government was bringing in. It's a lot of those kinds of things we've been proceeding with and it's surprising that the NDP would get into a flip-flop position like their friends the Liberals. I thought they would stay on track a little more and be consistent. I've had a lot of respect for that party in the past. When the honourable member for Durham East brings forth this information, it's interesting how they just keep changing positions like their Liberal friends. It was interesting the member for Durham East commenting on the many bills we've brought forward. I think one we brought forward in particular, Bill 31 for the Ontario College of Teachers, made them a profession. They always were a profession, but most professions have a self-disciplining college and this really elevates the position of teachers.

The Fewer School Boards Act, getting rid of some of the bureaucracy, getting rid of some of the politicians, was all part of what the Common Sense Revolution was about in the campaign. We have some excellent teachers; most of our teachers are excellent, dedicated teachers. They want to teach but they've been caught in a bad system, a

system that has deteriorated over the last decade or so, and they're very frustrated, as the member for Durham East made reference to. Part of their frustration does relate to discipline, but it relates to a system that is not particularly good, and I for one am very supportive of this bill on instructional time.

Mr David Caplan (Orléans): It's interesting, more closure motions from the government. When your position is so weak that it cannot withstand a debate, you have to choke off the debate. That's exactly what's happened here.

Mr Caplan: You hear the chatty member for Durham West wanting to talk about this also. They would like to debate. Quality, accountability, accessibility, that's what the member for Durham East said. Quality is harmed by over a billion dollars in cuts to education. Accountability, when you have a minister stand up every day and refuse to be held accountable for cutting dollars out, for closing schools, is absolutely a joke. And accessibility? We are seeing schools close today. The chair of the Toronto District School Board said that 120 operating schools will be closed as a result of the actions of this government.

The member for Durham East should review his words and he should live up to the principles he says. I think they're lofty principles, but this government does not do that.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Durham East, you can sum up.

Mr O'Toole: I'd like to thank the members from St Catharines, Algoma, Northumberland and Orléans, although the only one who spoke to my remarks was the member for Northumberland.

Respectfully, I will take issue with a couple of things to end my remarks and make a comment that our Premier recently made a speech to the chamber of commerce's notion of excellence meeting for small business in Ontario. Here's what he said, and I quote the Premier: "We're fighting this because we believe in provincial standards, a solid standard curriculum, smaller class size, standard report cards and a system that is accountable to students, parents and taxpayers. We all want this for our children." We have excellent teachers and the Premier is focused clearly on the goals.

I want to clarify. In my riding during Bill 160 I was featured in a full-page ad. I was the target in the middle. I thanked them for that advertisement because I don't have the money to spend on advertising. OSSSTF circled the target with I believe seven or 10 teachers, indicating that those 10 teachers would all lose their jobs. I consider it a case of false advertising. I have done the research and every one of those teachers has been retained. In Durham, originally they announced 40 layoffs; all have been recalled. In fact, in Durham they have hired 200 new teachers. So it's good news if you look to the positives. If you want to dwell on the negatives, then we're moving forward.

As far as the use of "inordinate" is concerned, I think the reason I chose that word — according to the member for Algoma — was very specific and very poignant. We have had 20 years of study, 20 years of inaction, and what has happened? We now have our colleges and universities accusing our children of being illiterate. Our children are not illiterate; the system has failed them. I tell you, our Premier and our Minister of Education are committed to changing it for our children.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 63. I think the public should recognize that if this were a debate about the quality of education and standards and instructional time and testing and ensuring that we devote all the energies we possibly can to improving the quality of education, the government would have no problem with any of the opposition. What the public should recognize is that, first and foremost, the primary reason for all the bills the member for Durham East just recited is to allow Mike Harris to have complete control over education. There is no question of that.

Mr O'Toole: It's time somebody took control.

Mr Phillips: The member just confirmed it. That's right. Mike Harris now has complete control over education. Why? So he can cut the guts out of the spending.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I guess that's why the OSSTF took our ads in millions.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Durham West, come to order.

Mr Phillips: There goes Mrs Ecker again, barking and barking because she doesn't want to hear a debate in the House around the real intentions of this government.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Scarborough-Elliessmere, come to order.

Mr Phillips: I say to the public, watch what they do, not what they say. The member for Durham East mentioned Bill 160.

Hon Mrs Ecker: More dollars —

The Acting Speaker: The member for Durham West, you come to order too.

Mr Phillips: What was Bill 160 all about? It was all about putting property taxes on to the businesses of the province of Ontario so they could fund education. I think the businesses of Ontario should recognize, because many of them are facing huge increases in their property taxes, that over half of the business property tax in Ontario goes directly into Mike Harris's education funding.

Ms Mushinski: What about the 75% that got decreases in your riding, Gerry?

The Acting Speaker: Member for Scarborough-Elliessmere, come to order.

Mr Caplan: Who's from Party Sound?

— you look at your business —

business taxes for education as Party Sound is, so when in Durham, recognize you are paying twice the rate on

Mr Phillips: My colleague says, "Who's from Party Sound?" Of course it's the Minister of Finance. But the

businesses in Durham should recognize they're paying twice the rate, over half of their property taxes is going to education and they are paying twice the rate in Durham as they're paying in Party Sound.

The reason I raise that is that these bills are first and foremost about giving Mike Harris complete control over education. As a matter of fact, the business property tax rates were set not here in the Legislature —

Hon Mrs Ecker: Ask them about their pay raises.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Durham West.

Mr Phillips: — not in a democratic forum; they were set in secret, down the hall in the cabinet room. Nobody found out what they were until they were announced in what we call the Gazette. On a Saturday there is a document that comes out and it says, "Here is the business property tax rate." The businesses in Durham will want to know. I know in Mr O'Toole's area they are paying twice the rate on business property taxes that they are in Party Sound.

I want to talk about the quality of education. As I said earlier, one of the members across tipped their hand and said that they were trapped in — I forget the exact words they used — a dreadful system.

This is what the province of Ontario takes around when it's selling Ontario. When Mike Harris is in Munich or in Beijing or somewhere else, what does Mike say about the quality of education in Ontario? "The education and skill attainment level of Ontario's labour force is one of our greatest strengths." There it is. Our education system is one of our greatest strengths. This is what is driving Ontario: our education system.

I want to be very clear here. This is not to say that education cannot be constantly improved. In fact, the teachers themselves would be the first to acknowledge that. They are always striving to improve. You go into any school and they are in the forefront of looking for new, innovative ways to improve. But what did Mike Harris say when he travelled around the world? He bragged about our education system.

I don't know whether the public follows this stuff carefully, but interestingly enough I was at a briefing the other day for the new capital projects for the school system. I went to the Conservative caucus room because that's where they invited us for the briefing. On the wall is this. You go down the hall to the Conservative caucus room and there it is. So when they're in the caucus room, they've got this in front of them. "The education and skill attainment level of Ontario's labour force is one of our greatest strengths."

Then they come in here and they attack the education system — just did it.

Mr O'Toole: No. The system.

Mr Phillips: The member for Durham East says no, but they just did it.

Mr Bradley: And at the chamber of commerce.

Mr Phillips: And at the chamber of commerce, as my colleague says.

I want to get it on the record that Mike Harris, when he's selling Ontario, talks about our education system being world-class, among the best. When he's in here trying to cut the guts out of the spending, he says it is in a crisis.

I want to talk a little bit about where we're going in education in Ontario. First, if the bill really talked about improving the quality of education you wouldn't have an argument from us, you wouldn't have an argument from the NDP. But it's about cutting \$1 billion out of funding and it's about closing schools. We heard today that there is going to be a total of 500 schools closed across the province. People might say: "Well, that's just fine. Close them." But I would say to the government that there is perhaps nothing more fundamental to a strong neighbourhood than its local school. It is the basis on which people either move into a community or stay in a community.

1710

I used to be on a school board. I was chairman of the Metro school board many years ago. The thing I am convinced of is the reason this urban area called Toronto has been successful — not the only reason, but a key reason — is because of the quality of the local schools. I was not on the city of Toronto school board, but there was a progressive group of people there who made certain that in the downtown area of Metropolitan Toronto the quality of the schools was second to none. That's why we are now regarded as an urban model. That's why we have vibrant neighbourhoods. I tell you that you are messing and tinkering and in danger of destroying something that has made the city of Toronto work.

Mr Bradley: We're going to the American model.

Mr Phillips: The American model. It's actually something I never thought I would see a Conservative government do and that is total control at the centre. This has simply become an exercise in numbers. It all is a mechanical exercise now. Even today in the debate, if people at home were listening to it, we've been talking about numbers of minutes and all of those things. It's become a mechanical debate. The mechanical debate is around, "That school is going to close if it doesn't meet these numbers." It has nothing to do with, "Does that neighbourhood, that community, need that school?"

Frankly, Bill 63 assumes that every school system in the province is the same. I tell you, Haliburton is dramatically different than downtown Toronto. It has different needs. It has different requirements. We are — I don't mean to be extreme — crazy if we think that we can legislatively impose a solution on schools and say, "Listen, every school will follow that." But it's the Bay Street mentality in the Premier's office that says this is simply a whole bunch of factories.

By the way, one of the bills was: "We'll get the principals out of the federation because if there's a strike we'll need to have our manager there. We've got to have that plant manager to keep the factory open." There's a strike in two weeks. For the rest of the time what you've done is you have removed the principal teacher. The principal

I really can't understand why many of the members are accepting that, because I bet you if, before you got elected to come to down here, anyone had told you, "Do you know what we're going to do? We're going to now set every school board's budget here in the Premier's office, we're going to set the tax rates in the Premier's office, we're going to prescribe the entire workday for every teacher, we are going to now have complete control" — the trustees are gone. They are basically impotent. Perhaps many people watching quietly or loudly are applauding. The trustees are not held in particularly high regard by all the population.

But I will say this: The trustees, in my opinion, are able to reflect the needs of the local community. By and large, been fortunate in the quality of our school boards reflecting the local needs. But they essentially are impotent now. If you talked to them, they'd say: "Listen, I feel trapped. I can't resolve the contract disputes. We are supposed to resolve them, but I can't resolve them because the province has all the controls. It's like you're asking me to take the fall for something I can't have any influence over."

I say to the public, I wish this were simply a debate about the quality of education. Then we could have a real debate. But it's a debate about control. Without a doubt, the most important resource we have in our schools to deliver quality education is our teachers. This is a very simple business. I went on the school board in 1969, and all the talk then was about, "We're going to have TVs in every classroom," sort of like the teacher was going to be redundant. It didn't happen. Think back to your own education. I frankly remember little about what was in the

I come from a business background. I would never want to have to run a business where I was told, "This is how you're going to run it. Every single school is going to be the same and you are going to teach X minutes a day, seven periods a day, every school." It's turning back. Surely we're learning one thing. It's that organizations have to be vital and have to take advantage of all the talent. Believe me, if you get 60 teachers together and say, "How do we best use the talents in this room?" they will say: "We can run extracurricular activities this way. We can do this this way." They will find far better solutions. But you're handcuffing the schools with this legislation. It's part of, for whatever reason, the Premier wanting complete control.

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accepting that, because I bet you if, before you got elected to come to down here, anyone had told you, "Do you know what we're going to do? We're going to now set every school board's budget here in the Premier's office, we're going to set the tax rates in the Premier's office, we're going to prescribe the entire workday for every teacher, we are going to now have complete control" — the trustees are gone. They are basically impotent. Perhaps many people watching quietly or loudly are applauding. The trustees are not held in particularly high regard by all the population.

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redundant. It didn't happen. Think back to your own edu-

cation. I frankly remember little about what was in the

debate, get that out on the table. This is all about cutting, control and mechanizing education.

I say to the public, tragically, I don't think I've seen this much turmoil in the education system ever, and it's not ending. I don't think our teaching profession knows where to turn now, because the government is giving itself more and more loaded guns. There's no longer even going to be any flexibility in discussing these things; it's going to be in law, in legislation.

I don't know where this comes from. I don't know the logic in it; I don't know why the Conservative backbench would support the direction of total control of education by the minister, the Premier and the bureaucrats. It's just foreign to me. We're turning the clock back.

Mr Caplan: No vision, no plan.

Mr Phillips: No vision. Tragically, I think we're

making a major mistake and Bill 63 is but another in a series of bills that have led us down the wrong path.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): I just briefly want to commend the member for Scarborough-Agincourt on the reference he has made to how Mike Harris has taken control and turned this education system into a crisis. It was a planned crisis. The Minister of Education about three years ago said he was going to do it, and now we have a crisis that is going to continue over the next few years, until this government is thrown out of office.

It's quite clear, as the member pointed out, that they're treating education, all the schools, as factories. You reduce the number of workers in a factory, and they're saying they want to reduce the number of teachers in every school. At the same time, instead of trying to make people believe that they want teachers to spend 25 more minutes in the classrooms, all they're doing is adding another 25 students to each teacher, which means that the teachers are going to be able to spend less time in meeting the needs of those particular students.

They've taken over \$1 billion out of education that should be used for the students who want to get a good education in this province. They're closing 500 schools. In some estimates we've heard it could be up to 600 schools that they're going to close down. It's just as though we were in a country where they're saying, "We have too many factories here and we're going to close down the factories." They're not really concerned about educating and getting a good education for the students. They're running this as a business. The bottom line is, "We've got 30% tax break to the wealthiest people in this province."

This is what it's all about. You make the rich people richer, and the students are suffering as a result of the agenda that Mike Harris has brought forward. They have to be thrown out of office, the sooner the better.

Mr Hastings: Let's start from the other end of the spectrum then, since across the way they oppose all these changes: The status quo is a marvellous thing. So where are we when we're at the status quo? We had larger school boards, which they opposed the reduction of, particularly the official opposition. We proposed standardized

textbooks and lots about my teachers. I think everyone in this Legislature was shaped by their teachers. I can remember them.

This is an interesting story, for me at least. This was a metaphor for me. In November I was at the local college. I'll tell this story to the public because it's what education is all about. First I went to graduation at L'Amoreaux Collegiate, a collegiate in the area I represent. There are flags in that school from 80 different countries. These are the flags of the countries where those students were born. This is a very diverse school, but they are there working together in enormous harmony. My community has undergone enormous change in the last 15 years, but the community, with an enormous amount of goodwill, accepted it. I think heavily because our schools have been able to do the job. L'Amoreaux Collegiate is very different from Halliburton high school. They just perform different roles. We're going to put a cookie-cutter on them.

By the way, I left that graduation to go back to the 40-year reunion of my football team in London, Ontario. The amazing thing was all three of my coaches were there. I remember to this day my high school coaches the first day of school: Bill Trout, Will Rice and Glyn Reyshon. They were all there 40 years later. They got up and spoke and they remembered the numbers we all wore. They remember all the plays, and I do too, and most of the team were there. By the way, in an enormous coincidence, a few months later the Ontario high school basketball championship was in the area that I represent. My old school, London Central, was playing. I went to the game. Who were the two coaches? Will Rice's son and Glyn Reyshon's son. It was incredible.

1720

What's the point of all this? Education isn't a factory; it's about teachers, motivated teachers, and these teachers were motivated. Bill Trout — gosh, on the last of football Bill slipped into his basketball jacket and away he went on basketball. If we think we can simply turn education into a mechanical exercise driven by formula and dictated by the Premier, we're — crazy's too strong a word, we are badly mistaken.

We're heading down a road. The road doesn't look like Harris has any intention of even slowing down on it, but we now have, without a doubt, an extremely demoralized teaching profession, which is tragic. Here's what's going to have more influence on the quality of education than anything else, a motivated teaching group. We essentially have taken the flexibility away from them. We're saying, "You are simply a number in front of a group of students, and whatever the formula dictates, that's how it will be."

For those of you who are in business, you would never, ever — this is turning back the clock 50 years. There's no company in the world that would try and do this now, take away their most important resource and stifle it. How is all this possible? It's possible by saying: "This is all about quality. We know the public wants quality. It's all about standards and testing." It's not about that. If that were the

esting. They fought and opposed that to the teeth. Thirdly, they oppose basic curriculum reform, from kindergarten to high school. When the minister was in my riding and we looked at it, it hadn't been changed since 1944. That's pretty good; keep it the way it is. Fourthly, they oppose any kind of changes in quality. They opposed the Sweeney report because they opposed the number of school boards. They never look at the motivation for any of the changes. The member for Scarborough-Agincourt comments about being a school trustee and on the Metro board 20 years ago, but look back at the Metro products that were turned out then. He himself, if you look through his remarks in this House, has advocated in the past that the education component cost be removed from the property tax. We did 50% of that. Now they're opposed to that and describe it as centralized control.

They talk about the role of the trustees being neutered. How did that come about, if you look at it? Because back in those days, they simply passed the tax bill on to the council of the day: "You figure out how you get your mill rates. We're spending those dollars." Restrained? Not much of it in those days when you look at the fancy packages that came out — on all sides.

If the status quo is the solution that we're looking for here, why is it that we've got economic uncompetitiveness and the number of unemployed youth in this country

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Further questions

and comments?

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I want to compliment

our colleague the member for Scarborough-Agincourt on his well-done presentation and account of Bill 63, and also part of the now infamous Bill 160. I think what he has said is the essence of what should be understood by the members on the government side, especially when the member has gone back and dwelled on the local schools and what they used to represent. They used to be the cornerstone of every community where not only the kids got an excellent education, but the place used to be the community centre where they would get all kinds of after-school programs — for adults, young ones, where parents could congregate, have meetings. It really used to be a community spirit.

What the member said very well is that now the Premier, the government, has taken full control and they are not listening to anybody. They are not listening to the students, to the teachers. They pretend to the present bills according to their own views.

Look at this. We have just been presented today, this afternoon, another motion to close debate. Isn't that nice? That means that after today, after the second reading, no one else can say anything else, they can't speak on this particular bill, and whenever the government feels comfortable to come and call for third reading, we will only be allowed half a day of debate. Isn't that nice? This is exactly what the government has been doing with Bill 160, what it's doing now with Bill 63, not give a chance to anybody. Where do they get the information? Who do they

get it from? Certainly they don't listen to the members in this House, to the parents, to the students and to the teachers.

1730

Mr Wildman: I listened carefully to my friend from Scarborough-Agincourt and his comments about the bill before us, Bill 63. I thought it was important that he set out the context in which this government has been dealing with education, their desire for central control and what that has done to the ability of boards to respond to local needs and the differences between an urban school and a school in small-town or rural Ontario. I thought that was very significant because the cookie-cutter approach, as the member said, does not work if you're going to really be serious about meeting the needs of students in the diverse communities of Ontario.

What I found most interesting in his remarks was his comment about the coaches that he had when he was in high school. I think everyone in this House understands when they think back to their school days that there was a teacher — maybe not more than one, but at least one teacher, whether it be in grade 1 or grade 11 or whenever — who affected them significantly. In some cases, unfortunately, it might be an adverse effect, but in most cases all of us had one teacher who really stimulated us, gave us a feeling of high self-esteem and made us feel worth something. What is happening now and less likely for teaching profession is making that less and less likely for students in Ontario today. I think that's so unfortunate because it is so important that students be stimulated by

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Responses?

Mr Phillips: I appreciate the comments of the members for Cochrane North, Algoma, Etobicoke-Rexdale and Yorkview.

I'll just comment on the last one, Algoma. I do think it's important we reflect back on that. My life was probably shaped by particularly secondary, I think, I can still visualize four or five who did shape my life. We're in danger of losing that for all of us. I suspect it was the extracurricular activities that we remember most.

The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale is just factually wrong. He's completely wrong. He said we opposed standardized testing. That is factually incorrect. This is the problem the public should recognize. We didn't oppose standardized testing. They said we opposed curriculum reform. We didn't. You got it wrong, wrong. We opposed having fewer school boards. You got it wrong. You said that you're happy with the property tax thing. I say to the businesses in Ontario, many of them facing huge increases, Mike Harris didn't take a penny off your property taxes. If you look at your tax bill, businesses, over half of your tax bill is going to Mike Harris's education. That's where your tax bill is. Mike Harris is setting that property tax bill down the hall, in secret. There's no democracy about that.

The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale either has a bad memory or he doesn't listen, but he was factually wrong.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Etobicoke-Rexdale,

come to order.

Mr Phillips: He's still barracking but he's wrong.

The final thing I would say to him is this: The thing that

has driven Ontario's economy according to the budget is

that now exports represent 46% of Ontario's economy.

Seven years ago it was 29%. We're kicking the heck out

of the Americans. Why? Because we've got a talented,

educated workforce. So he's wrong on all counts.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Christopherson: I appreciate the opportunity to

join in debate, recognizing that I'm the first one who is

now cut down to 10 minutes on something that has liter-

ally seized the front pages and seized the concern of every

parent in this whole province. MPPs are now reduced to

10 minutes to speak to a bill that has a lot to do with why

there were so many schools closed and why so many

children were outside those schools.

I want to begin by commenting on the issue of the

whole centralization. One of the things that I find particu-

larly interesting in all of this is the fact that it's the Mike

Harris Tories, Reform-a-Tories, who are centralizing

education in a way unprecedented and even unthought of

in the history of Ontario.

Let's stand back for a minute. Supposedly this is the

government that said decisions that are reduced and left to

the government closest to the people are the best deci-

sions. You've used that as your argument for downloading

all kinds of responsibilities on to municipalities in par-

ticular. But in this case you've gone in the other direction.

What I find particularly intriguing is when I think about

what would have happened if we had done this when we

were in government, had the NDP government said,

"We're going to centralize education," in exactly the way

you have, where you have taken absolute control of every-

thing that matters within education.

Mr Wildman: You would have said it was Statist.

Mr Christopherson: My colleague from Algoma says,

"They would have said it's Statist." Exactly the point.

You would have had a Red scare going on in this province

like we haven't had since McCarthy reigned the airwaves

in the 1950s. No question about it. I was there. I watched

the way the Tories in particular responded to all the meas-

ures we brought forward. Had we brought this in, the Tory

caucus would have been apoplectic. And yet, who is it that

has created an education czar? The Tories. Incredible.

You ask yourself, "Why would they do this?" It's all

about money. It's about the billion dollars that they are

taking out of the education system.

And what happened? It's there in the record books.

Anyone can see it. When this government tried to dictate

to the local school boards what they ought to do in terms

of funding for local schools, the boards said no, just as in

my own community of Hamilton-Wentworth the public

school board said: "No, we are not going to eliminate JK.

We're not going to do that. Every study says that's the

wrong direction to go in." Because of your funding cuts, it

meant they had to raise property taxes marginally, but

they had to raise them nonetheless. I can remember

standing in my place in this House and thanking them for having the guts to do that. But how did the government react? The government said, "How dare school boards defy edicts sent down from King Harris."

We had a revolution, yes, but a revolution of the sad-

dest kind, where you virtually eliminated the ability of

local communities and local school boards to decide for

themselves what was most important in terms of educa-

tional needs; that, coupled with the fact that you needed

that billion dollars out of education as that ministry's

share of the \$5 billion to \$6 billion that you had to find in

the existing budgets to fund your 30% tax cut, which we

all know benefits mainly the wealthy in this province, your

friends — by the way, the very friends that now, because

you changed the election laws, can kick back a lot more of

that money into your re-election war chest.

1740

That's what this is about. That's why you took the

control. You decided that the best way to find that money

was to eliminate teachers. You're going to eliminate

teachers because, as my colleague from Algoma, our

education critic, has pointed out, the largest cost in pro-

viding these kinds of services like education, health care,

policing and firefighting is staff and human resources.

You decided that in order to effectively find a billion

dollars, you'd eliminate as many teachers as you could.

The stats are there. There are over 5,600 more students

in the public system and there will be over 1,500 fewer

teachers. Your ads are saying that this is only about —

how does it run? — the 25 minutes, and then the ad says,

"Is that asking too much?" After you've beaten everybody

else up in the province and convinced them that everybody

else is making too much money, once you've got the mind-

set that everybody has to take less, you run an ad that

says, subliminally: "Hey, keep in mind how much we beat

you up. Keep in mind how we changed the labour laws so

that if you're in the private sector we've got the bosses

there beating you up." What's happening in J.B. Fields,

what's going on. In the public sector, one need only look

at OPSEU and everybody else who works in the public

sector. So with that subliminal message you're saying:

"It's only 25 minutes. Is that asking too much?"

The reality is that it's not about 25 minutes; it's about

at least 25 more students. Yes, your stats are going to

show that there's an increase in the interaction between

students and teachers, not because individual students are

getting more time but because you've raised the ratio of

how many students are being taught by individual

teachers. That's what's going on.

When the Minister of Education, Czar Johnson, stands

up and says, "We've increased the amount of spending in

the classroom," you don't want to talk about the fact that

when it comes to spending in classrooms, you changed the

formula. People in the public need to realize that every

time Dave Johnson, Czar Johnson, talks about increasing

money in the classroom, he has pulled things out of the

equation: "This doesn't count." Cleaning the classroom

doesn't count. Transportation doesn't count; it's not part

students in Ontario for the last three weeks there has been zero instructional time; last year, in the fall, for two weeks across Ontario, zero instructional time. It's interesting enough that this government has caused the situation where there is no instructional time going on in classrooms. This constant turmoil, this constant chaos does not only to create but to implement a crisis in education. It's absolutely astounding to hear this government say that they're putting more money into the system. They've taken a billion dollars out. They made the social contract savings permanent and then look another \$533 million out. That is not a commitment to quality.

We've seen a reduction in the number of teachers. We're starting to see something very interesting: we're seeing schools being closed. The member for Hamilton East, and I would like to commend him for his comments, talked about the effect of closed schools. Schools are an absolute cornerstone of our communities, and when you close the schools, you wipe out that sense of belonging, that sense of connectedness.

What we need today in education is stability. There is only one leader, Dalton McGuinty, and the Ontario Liberals who are committed to bringing stability back to our educational system. How would we do that? Allow one-year contracts; that's another thing you could do. We're committed to both of those.

I tell you that in schools around this province — for example in Russ McBratne's advanced history class in Lakeport, they have 41 students in the class. It's amazing. What this government says is not the reality.

Mr Wildman: I'd like to congratulate my friend from Hamilton Centre on his remarks and the emphasis he put on the centralization of control in the education system and the removal of the funding by this government, but also his comments with regard to the phony advertising campaign which basically says, "Twenty-five minutes: Is that too much to ask?"

The fact is that the government isn't really interested in ensuring more class instructional time for each student with the teacher. Many boards and teachers' bargaining units negotiated or were on the way to negotiating increasing the length of the periods so that each student would have more time with each teacher. It would have meant the same number of teachers. But the government said: "No, no, we don't want you to do that. You can't lengthen the periods by enough minutes to make up the time. You've got to ensure that the teachers actually teach another class." As my friend from Hamilton Centre said, that means 25 more students, not 25 more minutes, and that's what this was all about.

The member for Hamilton West says that all these things had to be defined. Well, the reason they had to be defined to be sure they didn't count mentioning, for instance, or extra help or extracurricular activities as instructional was because if they did, they could have met the number of minutes without cutting the number of

While I'm talking about the impact on budgets and the fact that you control them all, in the half a minute I've got left let me point out that in communities like mine in Hamilton we're being hit with this issue of school closures on communities and what it means. I represent the downtown urban centre of Hamilton and I know the impact all those neighbourhoods, those communities where people live, where the kids are being raised. The fact is that those schools are being closed not because there's not enough money, but because there's not enough money. You're going to shut them down the same way you shut down the teaching profession in this province.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): The bill we're debating, that we never seem to touch on, is this bill, which defines instructional time. For whatever reason, some people out there didn't seem to understand what instructional time meant, so this bill is to make it very clear exactly what instructional time is.

Instructional time to most of us meant time that teachers spent in the classrooms teaching students, students sitting at their desks learning from teachers. This bill clarifies that so there is absolutely no mistake about what qualities as instructional time. One of the things people didn't understand was that monitoring halls or being in cafeterias wasn't really teaching children in the classroom, and that's what's important.

This government is making reforms with respect to education, bringing back quality to education, introducing tougher curriculum, new report cards that parents can understand — I know when my kids were in school, it was difficult to understand where they stood in their class and how they were progressing — capping average class sizes. No teacher would dispute smaller class sizes. As a matter of fact, most teachers want that.

Both of my girls have graduated from the public school system. One finished university; the other is attending college. They both benefited from the excellent teachers they had in the school. I have to tell you that those teachers have a commitment to their students. The commitment to teach them the best that they possibly can, to make those students the best they can possibly be.

What we're trying to do is put more money into that system, to give those teachers the resources they need to do as good a job as they possibly can in the ever-changing environment we live in.

Mr Caplan: Bill 63 is a very interesting piece of legislation dealing with instructional time. For 200,000

teachers. They had to cut teachers. My question is, this bill does not define guidance or library, so how do teachers who are doing guidance counselling or who are librarians make up the 1,250 minutes according to this government?

1750

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): It was unfortunate that the member for the third party didn't really spend a lot of time on the content of this bill. He strayed somewhat and made dollars more the issue. We've got very strict rules in this House, and it's quite appropriate, I think, that we can't use words like "lie" or "dishonest" or "prevaricate" or "mendacious," as tempting as it may be. We can't say that. But when the member, followed by the Liberal member for Ortole, talks about a billion dollars being taken out of education, he's just plain wrong. We will be spending more money on education this year than we did last year and we've spent more money on education every year we've been in office than you did. We've spent more money on education. You talk the talk; we walk the walk. The fact that the Liberal member for Ortole strayed down that same path is very tempting. It's tempting, Mr Speaker. I guess my offence is the fact that the member from the third party started out.

For somebody concerned about money, as we speak, just a couple of blocks south of here at the University Club we've got a whole bunch of people going to the fundraiser of Mr Gerard Kennedy. Allan Rock is the guest speaker. At the same time that the federal Liberals are taking \$7 billion off the taxpayers of Ontario, they have no money for the hepatitis C victims. The hep C people are standing on University and they're taking names tonight, and Gerard Kennedy is at the top of the list. That's where the money should be going.

The fact of the matter is, whether it's education or health care, at the provincial level our government is spending more on all the priority areas. We're spending more than the Liberals. We're spending more than the NDP. We're spending what it takes.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Hamilton Centre has two minutes to respond.

Mr Christopherson: I appreciate the comments made by the members for Ortole and Algonia. I would like to respond to the comments made by the member for Scarborough East and my fellow Hamiltonian, the member for Hamilton West.

First of all, the member for Scarborough East: It's interesting that his first accusation is that I wasn't dealing with the bill and within a minute and a half he was talking about hepatitis C. The word "hypocrisy" comes to mind, but I won't use it. Speaker, because I know it's unparliamentary.

He also accused me of trying to boil this issue down to just dollars. That's what I was doing. I mean, that is very clearly what I was doing. I'm saying that this bill and everything else you've done in education is about dollars. It's about dollars you're taking out of the system because you have to pay for the \$5 billion to \$6 billion it cost to fund your 30% tax cut, and it's your wealthy friends who

I want to mention to my colleague from Hamilton West, who has not yet appeared on a monthly cable show on a number of community events where we talk about the —

Mrs Ross: What are you talking about?

Mr Christopherson: That's absolutely true — to

defend her record on these issues. When we were at Westdale school, the largest high school in our community, I can tell you those students were not convinced by the kind of arguments she's making here. This is about how much money you are spending per pupil and the impact of those dollars, and that when there are fewer teachers and when their time is being spent the way you say it has to be, our education system is poorer. That's the reality. That's the truth.

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired. Further debate?

Ms Mushinski: I want to start off by congratulating my colleague the member for Hamilton West who has this remarkable capacity for bringing focus to the discussion at hand. For about 20 minutes I was listening to the sometimes impassioned speech from the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, who talked very passionately about teachers. Then, of course, I listened to the rather impassioned and vocal speech from the member for Hamilton Centre who talked a lot about money. But I didn't really hear either of those two people speak about kids. I think it's very important, in looking at the whole issue of instructional time, what this agenda is all about, because our government's agenda is to put students first. We want to put students first by focusing on quality in the classroom.

We know that focusing dollars, money, in the classroom means that we're going to also focus on teachers. I think that's excellent because I believe that in Ontario we happen to have the best teachers in Canada — no mistake about that. What this bill is all about is to really focus on what the best needs of teachers are in the classrooms so that they can get on with the job of giving quality education to our kids. That's what this is all about.

If you look at the act, as my colleague Mrs Ross, the member for Hamilton West, so rightly pointed out, the act is called the instruction time act. If you look at the preamble, it speaks to the parties' inability — that's between the school boards and the teachers' unions — to reach new collective agreements because of differing interpretations of the standards contained in the Education Act.

We know that it's the union's role in life to fight for things that make life easier for teachers. We also know that they have a specific vested interest in protecting the status quo. So it's quite natural, therefore, that they really skewed the whole meaning of instruction. Consequently, they've been arguing for terms which contradict the spirit of the law we passed last year.

For example, I used to do cafeteria duty. I used to do lunchroom duty when my two daughters were in public

closure of the Pembroke Jail is simply this — and, yes, it's going to cost jobs. We can ill afford in the city of Pembroke to lose the \$1.5 million worth of payroll and the 40 jobs. It is an issue. That's in part why the Pembroke city council resolved the other night to denounce the decision. That's why the Pembroke downtown business association has resolved so clearly against this government initiative. It is certainly hurtful, and I don't like nor do I support the loss of \$1.5 million worth of payroll in an area with above-average unemployment as it is.

But my fundamental concern is that this decision ignores the geographic realities of the largest county in the province, namely Renfrew county. The distance between Ottawa and North Bay is 375 kilometres. Pembroke sits in the middle of that corridor.

If people don't understand, let me make the case. With the loss of the jail in Pembroke, people from communities like Pembroke and Petawawa and Rolphinton, Deep River, Barry's Bay, Whitney and Palmer Rapids, to name six or seven Upper Ottawa Valley communities, are going to be forced to travel four to five hours round trip to the nearest jail in Ottawa or Brockville. That's not fair, that's not reasonable, and it's certainly not going to save money.

Can you imagine, I say to the House tonight, telling people in Toronto that their jail is going to be in Sarnia? Can you imagine telling people in Oshawa that their jail is going to be in Brockville? Can you imagine telling people in Orillia that their jail is going to be in Sudbury? It is clearly not reasonable when the distances are that large. I repeat, this decision about the closure of the Pembroke jail is unfair and unreasonable primarily because it ignores the geographic realities of a very large district, the largest county in the province, namely, Renfrew.

I am also concerned about the fact that it is going to reduce the access of rural people to the justice system. "How?" you ask. Simply this: Under the current arrangement, we have a provincial jail in Pembroke. If I'm a citizen from Chalk River or Petawawa or Barry's Bay or Killaloe and I find myself in the Pembroke Jail, my minister, my priest, my family, my correctional service worker and my lawyer are in the neighbourhood. I have some access to them. If I am transported not to Pembroke but to Ottawa or Brockville, I'm an additional two or three hours away, and that is going to be a real and meaningful hardship on those people, many of these people rural people and many of these people of very modest means, in addition to which it is going to mean that these rural people are going to be materially prejudiced in terms of their sentencing options. My friends know that in the justice system today it is quite common for the courts to hand down things like the day or the weekend pass so you can actually work during the day to keep your job and support your family and serve your time at night or on weekends. That will not be possible for the rural people of the Ottawa Valley, who will lose their neighbourhood jail, their community or their county jail, and be forced to go two or three hours away to serve time in Brockville or Ottawa. That again is a very real hardship for these people. It will not only increase their costs, but it will reduce the access

school. I used to volunteer my time in lunchroom. That is not instructional time; never has been, certainly not in Scarborough, and should not be.

Home monitoring is not instructional time. Instructional time is time that is spent in the classroom teaching our children. The amendment we proposed today will clarify this issue to ensure its consistent, province-wide application as we move ahead to enhance the quality of education for our students. This is all part of our larger agenda, which is to really set the highest possible standards for every student in Ontario.

We've done that by introducing a new rigorous curriculum. We've done that by introducing province-wide testing, easy-to-understand report cards, capping average class sizes, new textbooks, more resources for computers, software and the Internet, tutors in the classroom, protected funding for early learning and junior kindergarten — and I want to repeat that — protected funding for special education, a new high school program, education planning starting in grade 7, new schools to be built sooner, more time for students in the classroom, more time for teachers in the classroom.

That's what this bill is all about. Let's get on with teaching our kids the best education in Canada now.

1800

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The motion for adjournment will be deemed to have been made and we'll proceed with the late show under standing order 37(a). Under that, the member for Renfrew North will have five minutes, and the Minister of Correctional Services or his assistant will have five minutes.

JAIL CLOSURES

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I rise tonight to pursue the question of the closure of the Pembroke Jail. I regret that Minister Runciman is not with us tonight, but I gather his parliamentary assistant is here.

In putting the question to the minister yesterday, I noted that his response indicated that the government was closing the 130-year-old jail in Pembroke because, according to the minister's response to me, the Pembroke jail is old, it is not in good shape and it is too costly. I fundamentally disagree with the minister's assessment. The Pembroke jail is 130 years old, but it has been substantially renovated in the last number of years, and I think by all objective standards it meets a very good standard of modern convenience.

Secondly, I reject entirely the minister's argument that there are going to be cost savings as a result of the closure of the Pembroke Jail.

I accept and, as I've said to the minister — we met on this subject almost three years ago — I understand the pressures elsewhere in the province for adjustments in the correctional system. The fundamental difficulty with the

of rural people in the upper Ottawa Valley to the justice system. That's not fair and that's not reasonable.

Finally, it is going to turn the OPP in our county into an expensive taxi service. The minister is going to save \$1.5 million on payroll at the Pembroke Jail. I tell you, he is going to spend at least that much annually on policing, from Rohton and Killaloe and points all around down the road on a daily basis, 300 kilometres to places like Brockville. If's not fair, it's not reasonable, it won't save money and it should be —

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The member's time has expired.

The Chair recognizes the member for London South. **Mr Bob Wood (London South):** I rise in response to a question put to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services yesterday in this House by the member for Renfrew North. The minister has asked me to respond on his behalf, as he had a previous commitment in the constituency.

First of all, the minister wanted me to put on the record the rationale for the long-overdue changes that this government is making to improve the correctional system in Ontario. It's important to note that the older jails in Ontario were never built to form a coordinated province-wide correctional system. Previous governments, including the former Liberal government, knew about this problem but did not take the necessary action to correct it. This government is taking action.

The Provincial Auditor has been critical of the overall cost of the correctional system in this province. The average cost per inmate per day is \$124. That's the highest of any province in Canada, and it's unacceptable. The daily cost at the Pembroke Jail is almost \$170 per day. In fact, in 1993 the auditor took a look at the older, inefficient jails in Ontario, including the Pembroke Jail, which is 131 years old. The auditor recommended that the ministry reduce these costs by closing the old jails and investing in new institutions. The NDP government actually began this process when they closed the Perth Jail. By building a compact system of larger, no-frills jails, we'll save taxpayers some \$75 million per year in the correctional system. We'll also be putting the jails and the programs where they are needed across the province. This will allow more inmates to access better programming to turn their lives around.

In response to the member's specific concerns about transportation of prisoners, on behalf of the minister I want to assure this House that there is already a committee in place to deal with transportation issues, which includes representatives from the Ministry of the Attorney General, the Pembroke Police Service, the Ontario Pro-

The House adjourned at 1:11.

1:30 of the clock next Monday.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn is deemed to have made. This House stands adjourned until

in the very near future.

scheduled to meet with the mayor of Pembroke, Les Scott, concerns. I want to assure the member that the minister is

ster is continuing to meet with local officials to hear their

Finaly, I want to indicate for the record that the min-

with these extensive consultations it was clear that there was no

year to explore ways of lowering costs and the possibility

with OPS&U representatives over a two-month period this

concern to employees and consultation. Under the minis-

In closing, the minister wanted me to address issues of

this option altogether.

ends. We are pressing the federal government to eliminate

into our jails as a result of people serving time on week-

concerns about the smuggling of contraband and weapons

sentences; in fact, just the opposite. We have very serious

has not identified any advantages or benefits to these

by the Criminal Code of Canada, the Ontario government

ences. Although these types of sentences are provided for

sentencing options such as intermittent or weekend sen-

The member also had concerns about the availability of

custody.

communication between lawyers and their clients in

video conferencing will also be used to ensure effective

nated areas for family and professional visits. Audio and

lawyers, the new and improved facilities will have desig-

With respect to the issue of visits by family members or

in Pembroke open.

be a bona fide business case for keeping the old, costly jail

Cartier Detention Centre every day, there would still not

going back and forth between Pembroke and the Ottawa-

of transporting offenders. Even if we had a staff vehicle

of operating the Pembroke Jail with the much lower cost

In any case, you cannot compare the \$2.1-million cost

also being explored.

creasing the use of technology such as video remand, are

with holding cells. Alternatives to transfers, such as in-

also advised that this new courthouse will be equipped

will be invested in a new courthouse in Pembroke. I'm

Attorney General has already indicated that \$6.5 million

can and will be improved under our plan. In fact, the

which has 250,000 court transfers taking place each year,

I can also say that the existing criminal justice system,

associations.

as stakeholders such as judges and criminal lawyers

vincial Police, the correctional services division, as well

Mr Haslings.....	2162, 2170
Mr Bradley.....	2166
Mr Galt.....	2167
Mr Caplan.....	2167, 2173
Mr Phillips.....	2168, 2171
Mr Len Wood.....	2170
Mr Sergio.....	2171
Mrs Ross.....	2173
Mr Gilchrist.....	2174
Mrs Mushinski.....	2174
Debate deemed adjourned.....	2174

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Jail closures.....	2175
Mr Conway.....	2175
Mr Bob Wood.....	2176

OTHER BUSINESS

Business of the House.....	2151
Mr Sterling.....	2151
Notice of dissatisfaction.....	2155
The Deputy Speaker.....	2155
Visitors.....	2155
The Deputy Speaker.....	2155

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeucl 1^{er} octobre 1998

AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

Loi de 1998 sur l'adoption internationale (Convention de La Haye), projet de loi 23, M. Cordiano.....	2137
--	------

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 1998 sur le Jour commémoratif de l'Holocauste, projet de loi 66, M. Chudleigh.....	2140
---	------

Loi de 1998 sur le Jour des

pionniers allemands, projet de loi 67, M. Wentlauer.....	2140
---	------

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 1998 sur les heures d'enseignement : normes minimales, projet de loi 63, M. David Johnson.....	2174
--	------

Débat présumé ajourné.....

CONTENTS

Thursday 1 October 1998

2792

continued overleaf

Ontarians with disabilities legislation	2149
Ms Lankin	2149
Ms Bassett	2150
Drinking and driving	2150
Mr Parker	2150
Mr Clement	2150
Highway 3 bypass	2151
Mr Crozier	2151
Mr Clement	2151
PETITIONS	
Property taxation	2151
Mr Duncan	2151
Environmental assessment	2152
Mr Martin	2152
Abortion	2154
Mr Bob Wood	2152, 2154
Student safety	2152
Mr Caplan	2152
Property taxation	2152
Mr Christopherson	2152
Electoral reform	2153
Mrs Fisher	2153
Municipal restructuring	2153
Mr Bradley	2153
Hospital restructuring	2153
Mr Christopherson	2153
German heritage	2153
Mr Weitlaufer	2153
Diabetes education services	2154
Mr Michash	2154
Psychiatric hospitals	2154
Mr Christopherson	2154
Hotel Dieu Hospital	2155
Mr Bradley	2155
SECOND READINGS	
Instruction Time: Minimum	
Standards Act, 1998, Bill 63,	
Mr David Johnson	
Mr Conway	2155, 2159, 2162
Mr Wildman	2158, 2167, 2171
2173	
Mr Spina	2158
Mr Michash	2158
Mrs Boyd	2158, 2159, 2163
Mr O'Toole	2161, 2163, 2167
Mr Christopherson	2162, 2172, 2174

FIRST READINGS	
Holocaust Memorial Day Act, 1998,	
Bill 66, Mr Chudleigh	
Agreed to	2140
Mr Chudleigh	2140
German Pioneers Day Act, 1998,	
Bill 67, Mr Weitlaufer	
Agreed to	2140
Mr Weitlaufer	2140
MOTIONS	
Private Members' Public Business	2140
Mr Sterling	2140
Agreed to	2140
Appointment of presiding officers	2140
Mr Sterling	2140
Agreed to	2141
Mr Jackson	2141
Mr Crozier	2142
Mr Bradley	2142
Mrs Boyd	2142
ORAL QUESTIONS	
Health care	2143
Mr McGuinity	2143
Mrs Wilmer	2143, 2144
Mrs Pupatello	2143
Justice system	2144
Mr Phillips	2144
Mr Harnick	2144
Cancer treatment	2144
Mr Hampton	2144
Mrs Wilmer	2145
School closures	2145
Mr McGuinity	2145
Mr David Johnson	2145, 2146
Mr Hampton	2146
Academic testing	2147
Mr Hampton	2147
Mr David Johnson	2147
Firearms control	2148
Mr Danford	2148
Mr Runctman	2148
Mental health services	2149
Mr Gravelle	2149
Mrs Wilmer	2149

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS	
Intercountry Adoption (The Hague Convention) Act, 1998	
Bill 23, Mr Cordiano	
Mr Cordiano	2121, 2128
Mr Wildman	2122
Mr Carroli	2123
Mr Duncan	2124
Mr Kormos	2125
Mrs Munro	2125
Mr Gerritsen	2126
Mr Parker	2127
Agreed to	2137
Health care funding, private members' notice of motion number 21,	
Mrs Pupatello	
Mrs Pupatello	2136, 2128
Mr Lessard	2129
Mr Newman	2130
Mr Duncan	2132
Mr Galt	2132
Mr Agostino	2133
Mr O'Toole	2133
Mr Sergio	2134
Mr Skanica	2134
Mr Kennedy	2135
Mr Christopherson	2135
Mrs Boyd	2136
Negative	2137
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	
Health care	2137
Mr Sergio	2137
Teachers' collective bargaining	2138
Mr Martin	2138
Mahatma Gandhi	2138
Mr Jim Brown	2138
Medical laboratories	2138
Mr Kennedy	2138
Young offender facility	2138
Mr Kormos	2138
Oktoberfest	2139
Mr Weitlaufer	2139
Government advertising	2139
Mr Bradley	2139
School closures	2139
Mr Sillipo	2139
Compensation for hepatitis C patients	2140
Mr Shea	2140

